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# PRISONERS OF WAR

AND

## MILITARY PRISONS

PERSONAL NARRATIVES OF EXPERIENCE IN THE PRISONS  
AT RICHMOND, DANVILLE, MACON, ANDERSON-  
VILLE, SAVANNAH, MILLEN, CHARLESTON,  
AND COLUMBIA

WITH

A General Account of Prison Life and Prisons in the South during the  
War of the Rebellion, including Statistical Information Pertain-  
ing to Prisoners of War; together with a List of Officers  
who were Prisoners of War from January 1, 1864

BY

ASA B. ISHAM

LATE FIRST LIEUTENANT CO. "F," SEVENTH MICHIGAN CAVALRY, FIRST BRIGADE,  
FIRST DIVISION, CAVALRY CORPS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

HENRY M. DAVIDSON

LATE SERGEANT BATTERY "A," FIRST OHIO LIGHT ARTILLERY, JOHNSON'S DIVISION,  
ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND.

AND

HENRY B. FURNESS

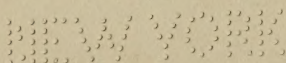
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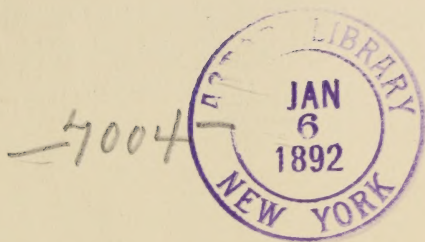
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99 West Fourth Street

1890.





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CAMPBELL & CO.,  
Cincinnati, O.

Printed and bound by  
ROBERT CLARKE & CO.,  
Cincinnati, O.



## PREFACE.

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During the past ten years, many narratives have been published, detailing the sufferings of Federal prisoners in the late War of the Rebellion. They have, for the most part, been confined to accounts of the personal experience of the writers in the several prisons in which they were confined, and many of them exhibit vivid pictures of the horrible condition to which they were reduced by the policy of their captors.

The following narratives furnish a more complete account of prison life than any which have been heretofore presented to the public, by combining the stories of the hardships endured by officers and by private soldiers respectively. They were prepared for the press many years ago, while the incidents related were still fresh in the memory, and while the unfortunate writers were still smarting under their terrible experience. The truthfulness of these narratives is, however, corroborated by a cloud of witnesses, whose veracity is unimpeached.

The General Account of prisons and prisoners in the South attempts to give a somewhat more extended view of the subject, and shows that the treatment described by the narrators was general, and not confined to particular prisons or special localities. The materials for this part of the work were drawn from various sources. "The Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War," made to the Forty-fifth Congress, and known as "Shank's Report," has furnished the main supply of documentary evidence. It is referred to as "H. R." in the following pages.

The narratives of Captain Newsome, Lieutenant A. C. Roach, and Lieutenant A. O. Abbott have been freely consulted; while the "Andersonville Diary of First Sergeant John L. Ransom," and the exceedingly interesting story, "Life and Death in Rebel Prisons," by Sergeant-Major Robert H. Kellogg, have been used to verify the testimony derived from the recited tales of other sufferers, who have never told their story to the public. Some statements have also been drawn from "Martyria, or Andersonville Prison," by Dr. Augustus C. Hamlin, Medical Inspector U. S. Army, a profound and learned work, seeking from a medical and scientific stand-point to account for the horrors of that prison. The authors are also under obligations to General J. D. Cox and Major E. C. Dawes for valuable advice in the preparation, and to the latter gentleman and to Captain Robert H. Kellogg for the free use of their valuable collections of prison literature.

THE AUTHORS.

*June 9, 1884.*



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EXPERIENCE IN REBEL PRISONS FOR UNITED  
STATES OFFICERS

AT

RICHMOND, MACON, SAVANNAH, CHARLESTON,  
AND COLUMBIA



BY

ASA B. ISHAM

LATE FIRST LIEUTENANT CO. "F," SEVENTH MICHIGAN CAVALRY, FIRST BRIGADE,  
FIRST DIVISION, CAVALRY CORPS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC





## CHAPTER I.

STARTING UPON A CAMPAIGN—MARCHING INTO THE WILDERNESS—A NIGHT SCENE AND MARCH—GOING INTO BATTLE—THE USES OF CAVALRY—SUPPORTING A BATTERY—PANIC IN THE LEAD HORSE CARAVAN—A HORN BLOWING—SLEEPING ON THE FIELD—KNOWLEDGE RESPECTING THE WILDERNESS.



THE Army of the Potomac never set out upon a campaign in lighter marching order than that of 1864, when it took up the march toward Richmond. For the cavalry arm of the service, one wagon to a regiment and two lead horses to each company constituted the transportation equipment. It was generally realized by the troops that their powers of endurance were likely to be tested as never before. Hence, every man put as little burden upon himself and horse as possible, carrying nothing that he could do without. If one had a preference for a blanket, he left behind his overcoat; or, if the overcoat was thought indispensable, the blanket was thrown out. Cooking utensils were commonly reduced to a pint tin cup and a half of a canteen, which latter served for a frying and stewing pan, with a stick split at one end for a handle. Yet some, who were likely to mourn for the "flesh pots of Egypt" in the Wilderness, clung fondly to a light skillet and a coffee pot.

On the 4th of May, 1864, the camps around Culpepper Court-house were broken, and the columns were set in motion for the Rapidan. Quietly the march was conducted. Conversation was not indulged in to any great extent, every one being apparently occupied by his own reflections. The soil moved over had been the scene of many a fight, to which recollection recurred, and a fresh

encounter was momentarily looked for where the foe had been so often met. Bivouacking for the night at Stony Mountain, the march was resumed at 3 o'clock upon the morning of the 5th, crossing the Rapidan at Ely's ford.

Upon reaching the high ground in the vicinity of Chancellorsville, we moved "On right, into line," to present sabers to General Grant and his staff, who rode by to head-quarters' tents, pitched a short distance to the right, while a salute was fired by a section of artillery. It was evident to all that there was no immediate danger of an engagement, and a lighter feeling pervaded the ranks. Here a number of colored regiments were overtaken, the



first ever seen by the Army of the Potomac. They had tents pitched, arms stacked, and were disporting themselves in their bare feet. Their pedal extremities and the army brogan did not seem to be exactly natural affinities. Their union produced a most uncomfortable chafing of protuberances, so

that, while the colored brother cherished his shoe leather and suffered the pains of martyrdom with it upon show occasions, he much preferred to carry it upon his back during the steady plodding of a campaign. To judge from expressions, these fellows meant business. "Whar is de enemy; has you all saw him anywhar?" "We des want to kotch dem Johnny Rebs once; we make 'em holler, suah." "Dey is done clean gone, and we can't find 'em." "Guess dey hyar we was a comin'. Yah! yah! yah!" "We're gwine fer to git 'em yit." "Why can't you all head 'em off wiv your hoss critters, and den we mash 'em all to pieces." A compliance with the last suggestion was promised, to their evident delight, and they were left in the rear. The poor fellows found the "Johnny Rebs" many times, often to their sorrow, before the campaign

was over; and upon some occasions, too, they found that they turned up when they were not being hunted for.

A halt was made in the evening near the slope of the high plateau overlooking the Wilderness, not a great distance in advance of General Grant's head-quarters. At 2 o'clock on the morning of the 6th, we were again in the saddle and pressing toward the front by way of the Furnace road. In the descent from the upper level, a scene long to be remembered was presented to the vision. Fires had been lighted up by the sides of the roads, which revealed by their glare long lines of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, filling up the tortuous ways in all directions, in wavy motion, like the undulations of some vast serpent. Then a blast furnace, with its accumulated stores of fuel, broke out in grand conflagration, illuminating a vast extent of country by its lurid light. The black, impenetrable forest spread out in all directions, the central mass of flame, the winding streaks of fire diverging therefrom, and here and there disclosing moving, writhing, sinuous, slender, long-extended forms—all combined to impress upon the mind a preternatural idea of the spectacle, as though the demon of destruction was floundering and belching out tongues and volumes of flame in the murky depths below. Now and then our advance guard would press too hastily upon the retiring rear guard of the enemy, when the far-off rattle of musketry and subdued shouts would be borne to the ear, and the undulations in the columns would become more marked. But soon we were threading the mazes of the Wilderness, circling about the hosts of rebellion, which the darkness and the woods shut out from sight. Lively fusilades of musketry, not far removed, halts in readiness for action, were of frequent occurrence; but with these exceptions, this night's march was not dissimilar to other night marches through a forest growth. All such marches are attended with such mishaps as falling into "chug holes," stumbling over obstructions, getting caught in the snares of log bridges and rough pieces of corduroy, and running foul of overhanging branches, with results usually more annoying



than grave, though sometimes serious for horse or rider, or both. The moral nature received a terrible wrench, when from a half-sleeping, dreaming state, one is suddenly precipitated into a mud hole, hung upon a limb, or made to practice a grand balancing feat by a tumble over some obstacle in the way. While doubtless the cavalry contained many "souls made perfect," these accidents seemed only to befall the wholly unregenerate, if the expressions uttered upon such occasions may be taken in evidence. But such incidents banished sleepiness by the lively sallies interchanged between the ones who had "fallen into the pit" and his comrades, enlivened the spirits, and made refreshing breaks—to all but the victim—in the monotony of the dull, plodding hours.

Toward morning, 6th of May, a position was taken up at the intersection of the Brock pike and the Furnace road, upon the extreme left of the Union line of battle, joining on to the 2d (Hancock's) Corps. Morning had not long dawned, when the ball opened by the driving in of the pickets established upon the pike. The thunder of artillery and the continuous, vibrating roll of heavy musketry heard upon the right told that the infantry was already hard at work. Very soon all was activity along our own front. Passing out from the woods into an open, we were brought up "Front into line," in order to arrest the progress of a regiment which was falling back in great confusion before an onslaught of the enemy, the officers' efforts and shouts of "Rally! Rally! Halt!" and "Right about, wheel!" being of no effect. "Turn back, boys, and at 'em;" "You have nothing to fear, for we're right here;" "You are charging your friends now, the enemy is in the other direction;" were some of the exclamations which greeted them as they halted before our line. "Oh, you be blanked," responded the fugitives, as soon as they regained composure. "Our alignment wasn't right, and we just fell back to re-form, so as to get a good swing at them." Re-form they did, in short order, too; and back they went, right gallantly, in splendid form, pushing the enemy before them.

The battle ground was a clearing over a surface slightly rolling, including an area of perhaps forty acres, and surrounded by woods upon all sides. On the Confederate side of the field were two batteries of light artillery, which were opposed by eight pieces of artillery upon our side. The action of that day, so far as it pertained to the 1st Cavalry Division (Torbert's) and the enemy in its front, consisted of an artillery duel, charges and countercharges of mounted cavalry across the field, and fighting dismounted in the woods. Evening found us masters of the field, the enemy, under Fitz Hugh Lee, having been forced to retire with heavy loss, leaving his dead and wounded and many prisoners in our hands.

It is the popular idea that the cavalry is held in reserve until the supreme moment for action arrives, when it is hurled in compact, irresistible mass against the infantry battalions of the enemy, dashing them to atoms and deciding the contest. The fact is that the cavalry forms the guard and feelers for an army. In a forward movement, it pushes in advance; on a retreat, covers the rear, resisting the enemy's advance; in a general engagement, it is posted upon both flanks, to protect against flank movements and furnish information of the disposition of the opposing forces; while, when the army is at rest, it constitutes the outposts, always maintaining a hold upon the skirts of an enemy, so that there can be no decided activity upon the one part that is not immediately discovered by the other and a corresponding activity induced. Hence, from the character of its service, and the surface variations of the soil, its natural and artificial obstructions, the cavalry must nearly as often fight upon foot, like infantry, as upon horseback. A genuine cavalryman has no great fondness for dismounted fighting; he feels that he has lost the half of himself when separated from his horse. Yet he would rather engage in battle in any capacity than to be placed mounted in support of a battery of artillery. There is every thing in *action* to uphold a soldier's courage. In mass movement he forgets his individuality. In the association and excitement of *active* participation, the idea of

personal hazard does not occur to him. But behind a battery, in plain sight of the enemy's guns, whose every flash he sees, he soon begins to imagine himself the direct target for every shot. His consciousness of individuality becomes intense. The shrieking shells he can not resist dodging as they strike in front of the battery and ricochet, seem only to have missed his head by the eighth part of an inch. He is sure that the next one will play sad havoc with his anatomy. He notes the casualties, and the blanched faces of the wounded, as they are borne to the rear past him, make him heart-sick. He reproaches himself for ever having been such an idiot as to think that the country was in need of his services. What good is he to the country, sitting up as a mark behind a battery of artillery! He holds it a criminal sacrifice of human life to hold men quiet and helpless under a destructive fire. He can see no danger to the battery, since the skirmishers and maneuvering forces are away out to the front of it. He thinks that he can best conserve his country's interests by taking himself to a place of safety, and he looks along the line to discover if his comrades are so occupied as not to miss his presence. They all appear to be speaking to him with their eyes, "Stay where you are!" He straightens up in his saddle, gives his horse a spur to wake him up, and assumes an appearance of unconcern. The skirmish line is being crowded back, and inspired by the possibility of being ordered to charge, he grasps his saber tighter, and his soul bounds up. Down go his spirits again. The skirmishers advance, and the rebel shots come thicker, angrier and uglier than before. He observes the surgeons passing behind the advanced lines, within the range of bullets, ministering to the injured and sending them back. He envies them, for they are doing *something*, and even if they are exposed to danger, full employment in the line of duty destroys their consciousness of it. The men serving the guns of the battery—stripped to the buff, and black as coal from sweat and powder accretion—he would gladly change places with. Men and horses are stretched lifeless about the cannon,



and pieces are disabled, but the artillerymen, warmed up to their work, have no time to take thought of any thing else. Finally comes the relief. More regiments are sent dismounted into the woods upon either side; mounted regiments in column of companies pass over the open; the whole line, mounted and dismounted, moves in concert amid cheers and yells; the rattle of carbines and pistols is like a Fourth of July jollification upon a grand scale, and the artillery discharges are so rapid as to produce an almost continuous roar, completely drowning the efforts of the bands. Then comes an almost painful stillness, followed, after an interval, by rousing cheers. The day is won; the enemy is in retreat.

An episode of the day was a panic in the lead-horse caravan, which had been left upon the side of the road in our rear. When the cannon balls and shells began to crash through the woods in great abundance, the contrabands and skulkers, who were interested in the welfare of the lead-horses, deemed it incumbent upon themselves to get these beasts of burden into safer quarters. They were led off by one named Malachi, but more familiarly known as "Bones," a sad-eyed contraband, whose bullet-head, not much larger than a pint measure, was surmounted by a coon-skin covering of rare design. He was mounted, without saddle or bridle, upon a lame animal which went upon three legs, and he steered him by means of a hickory club carried in his good right hand. They were just getting started when a shell went screaming through the tree-tops right over the cavalcade, and sending down upon it a shower of small twigs. "Bones" uttered a wild "Ki, yi!" turned his eyes toward heaven so that only the whites were visible, belabored his



poor beast into a run, and, with the rest of the procession in close pursuit, struck out for the rear of Hancock's corps. This was but rushing from "the frying pan into the fire," and they soon turned back, more terror stricken than before, in a mad gallop, to their previous location, only to fly off again at the sound of shrieking missiles. An officer, sent back to look after them, found them rushing pell-mell back and forth at the top of their speed. So wild with affright were they that he could exercise no control over them, until, giving chase, he unhorsed "Bones" by the liberal application of the flat of a saber about that worthy's head and shoulders. The leader being thus dethroned, order was easily restored and a refuge found for them beyond the line of fire.

In obedience to orders, we moved back to the Furnace to camp that night, reaching there some time after dark. Here all the buglers in the command were sent out into the woods to all points of the compass, and, in sweet disconcert they blew, and repeated, over and over again, all the calls in the regulations, except the one for quinine. They bugled for at least an hour, and if their wind held out they may have blown all night for all that the deponent knoweth to the contrary. Tired soldiers do not lose any sleep on account of a little serenade like that. This musical demonstration was for the sole benefit of the rebels, in order to deceive as to the force, location, and movements of the cavalry, but had it been made more exclusive by surrounding Lee's army with the buglers, the impression would have been more decided, and the results might, perhaps, have been as astonishing as those following a horn blowing performance once upon a time at ancient Jericho.

Daylight on the 7th of May found us back again in the position of the day before. Early in the forenoon, in a short but severe engagement out on the Brock pike, the 1st Michigan Cavalry drove back the enemy toward Todd's Tavern, which was soon after occupied by the 2d Division under General Gregg. The remainder of the day was whiled away in light skirmishing, and excursions to

unknown points on the infantry lines, where we were formed in readiness for action at the edges of open spaces. The infantry, however, proved capable of holding its own; no call was made upon us for assistance, and we went back to our own particular battle possession. Here we remained mounted, in line of battle, until after dark, before orders were given to dismount and bivouac. The stench from decomposing horses, thickly strewn over the field, was almost stifling. It seemed nearly strong enough to arrest the course of bullets which were flying about promiscuously in the darkness, since the enemy had again appeared on our front, and a lively interchange of leaden compliments was in progress between the picket lines, but a short distance removed. There was no hunting about for a choice spot upon which to rest, but each one nestled closely into the lap of Mother Earth wherever he was, however much he might entertain views of more desirable positions. Neither were noses turned up at dead animals when they could be felt within arms reach. In fact, a snug berth under the lee of a dead horse giving off the odors of putrefaction is not to be despised when wild picket firing at short range is indulged in upon a dark night. Those who found in the morning that they had slept upon the entrails of disemboweled steeds derived satisfaction from the fact that they had enjoyed softer beds than their companions.

Daylight of the morning of the 8th brought the revelation that the enemy had stolen away in the night. We then moved over to Todd's Tavern. On our way we were compelled to shoot some riderless horses, wounded in the legs, since they had no notion of being deserted, but persisted in crowding into places in the ranks and endeavoring to keep up with the column. The neighings of the poor beasts as they were dropped by the roadside were almost human in their plaintiveness. From Todd's Tavern we marched to Silver, on the Fredericksburg plank-road, where the entire cavalry corps was massed and where we spent the night.

Thus was our service in the Wilderness concluded.

Nothing could be seen beyond the little open stretch before us, and for a knowledge of what had transpired about us, we had been dependent entirely upon the sense of hearing. We judged by the sounds of conflict which we had heard that a great battle had been fought, but we knew no more respecting the result than the man in the moon. As there was no enemy to molest us, we took it that he had been worsted. We had but vague ideas concerning the topography of the country about us and our relative position to the rest of the forces. The Furnace was the central point to our minds. We knew that the road to our rear led back there, but that was about all we did know with certainty, since our marches were nearly all made at night. We had glimpses of bits of road filled up with infantry columns, or with ambulances for the wounded, of woods choked up with underbrush and fallen timber, and of openings covered with a growth of scrub-bushes, and it was the predominating idea in the line that the enemy was every-where in position at the farther side of such clearings.



## CHAPTER II.

ON A RAID TO RICHMOND—MALCONTENTS—THE DELIGHTS  
OF A CAVALRY MARCH—RELEASING CAPTIVES—CAPTURE OF  
BEAVER DAM STATION—GENERAL SHERIDAN—BATTLE OF  
YELLOW TAVERN.



IN the morning of the 9th of May, the cavalry corps started on a raid to Richmond, around the left flank of Lee's army, the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division having the advance. In moving off, we passed through the Provisional 9th Corps, which was a motley aggregation, consisting of heavy artillery regiments, taken from the forts around Washington, Baltimore, and Fortress Monroe, and pressed into service as infantry, dismounted cavalry regiments, negro troops, and the odds and ends of service. All except the colored troops were growling and grumbling, declaring that they had never enlisted for any such service, and that they would not fight. Whenever they caught sight of a general officer they set up the cry of: "Hard tack! Hard tack! Rations!" The soldiers in the cavalry columns riding by "chaffed" them unmercifully. "You can't eat hard tack," they said. "You ought to have soft bread and butter, terrapin soup, and custard." "You will take terrible colds without your feather-beds." "What prospects for a corn crop?" "Won't fight, eh?" "You do not need to fight; you are only for those darkies back there to pile up for breast-works." There was a new regiment, which had never been mounted, called the 1st New Jersey Hussars. The seams and edges of their jackets were trimmed with yellow lace, while the breast was ornamented with parallel stripes of the same material running crosswise about one inch apart, with loops at the sides and centers surrounding brass but-

tons; hence they received the name of "butterflies." "Hello, butterflies!" was the salutation, "you have got 'em bad." "There is nothing like good foot exercise for the yallers." "If it would not chafe your tender skins too bad we would like to have you light up behind us and learn what hardship it is to be compelled to ride." "Don't want to make you fight as infantry; that's not the idea. You have only to keep the crows and buzzards scared away from the lazy heavy artillery until the 'rebs' get a chance to take their toll out of them." It is but fair to record that the retorts were as numerous and pungent as the direct thrusts. "Is it sucking eggs that makes your voice so clear?" "Are you starting out to gather the poultry crop?" "Get on with you, riff-raff; your stealing does the Confederacy more damage than your fighting." "You talk as easy as you run." "Do the buzzards distress you? We'll bait the buzzards with *you* if you attempt to run over us in your fright when the 'Johnnies' chase you back," etc. This running fire of badinage was only of short duration, for we were passing along at the trot, and soon parted company with the malcontents.

There is nothing particularly delightful or exciting in thumping along at a trot in a cavalry column. The clouds of dust sent up by thousands of hoof-beats fill eyes, nose, and air-passages, give external surfaces a uniform dirty gray color, and form such an impenetrable veil that for many minutes together you can not see even your hand before you. Apparently just at the point of impending suffocation a gentle sigh of wind makes a rift, and a free breath is inspired. Dust and horsehairs penetrate every-where, working under the clothing to the skin, and fixed by the sweat, the sensation is as though one was covered by a creeping mass of minute insects. Accumulations occur in the pockets, the rations come in for their full share, and with the bacon, particularly, so thoroughly do dirt and horse-hairs become incorporated, that no process of cleansing can remove them. But there is no better appetizer than horseback jolting, and little

squeamishness with genuine hunger. A hunk of dirty raw bacon, with "hard tack," on a campaign, are partaken of with keener relish and enjoyment than "a good square meal" when engaged in less arduous duty.

Shortly after crossing the North Anna river, a train of the enemy's ambulances was overhauled. In this capture was included a paymaster, with a large quantity of Confederate money. This commodity was free to all troopers who wanted it, but was valued so little that most of it was burned with the wagon which contained it. Some had afterward cause to regret that they had not burdened themselves with a few thousands of this rubbish. Flankers were thrown out on either side of the column, and pushing along rapidly we soon overtook and liberated about four hundred of our infantry who had been captured in the Wilderness, and were on the way to Richmond as prisoners of war. The greater part of the Confederate escort was also secured. Among the captives thus rescued were many officers, from the rank of colonel down. Their joy at their release was unbounded. They exalted the cavalry above any other arm of the service. But we paused not to receive their adulations. The column hurried forward to Beaver Dam Station, where, striking the Virginia Central Railroad, three trains of cars, two locomotives, and some prisoners, fell into our hands. Several hundred stand of arms, and supplies for Lee's army to the value of several millions of dollars, were included in the spoils. What the troops could dispose of was distributed among them, and the balance, together with the station and cars, burned. The railroad was torn up in both directions from the station, and we bivouacked for the night in the immediate vicinity. Several times during the night attacks were made upon us, but they were met in such a manner as to discourage a long continuance.

Early the morning of the 10th, we were on the move again, with flankers out upon both sides. The country passed over was for the most part well cultivated, ditched, and fenced. The fields and houses had

apparently thus far escaped the ravages of war. The flankers had instructions to take from the places along the route such grain and provisions as they might chance upon which were needed for subsistence, but to commit no depredations. How they "chanced" upon stores which even the proprietors assumed to know nothing about is a mystery which one may not understand, even though he had charge of the flankers on the right of one brigade. It is astonishing what a wide latitude the needs of human subsistence extend over. The camp-fires that night, just beyond the South Anna river, revealed that they comprehended, at least, biscuit, corn-bread, ham, mutton, various kinds of poultry, butter, honey, preserves, and dried fruits.

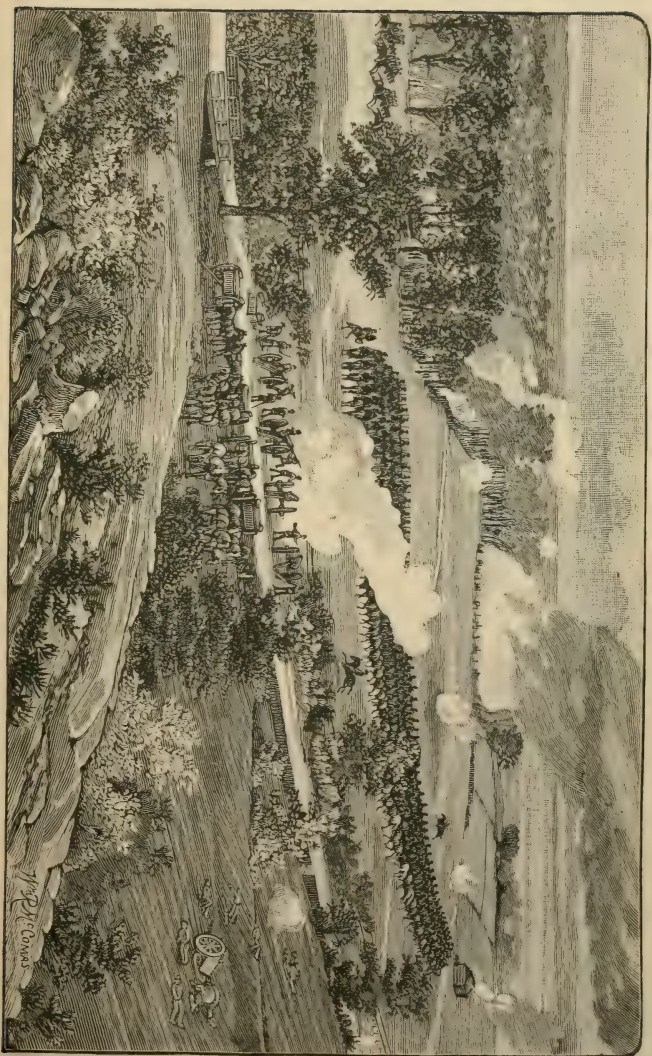
About daylight upon the morning of the 11th, in hot haste, we deployed dismounted as skirmishers into the woods on our left to repel an attack. The enemy, however, seemed to be satisfied upon finding where we were, and drew off after firing a few shots. The onward march was then resumed in a leisurely manner along the Virginia Central Railroad, which had been torn up by the 2d Division (Gregg's), which now had the advance. It was a lovely day, the air was mild, the country charming, and we thought it was a holiday time we were having as we rode easily along, the most common topic of discourse being General Phil. Sheridan, who had been assigned to the command of the cavalry corps but only a short time previous to its starting out upon the campaign. It was the unanimous opinion that he had at least demonstrated one thing—that he knew how to march a cavalry force without exhausting it. He had already won the hearts of the command by his simple, easy, unostentatious demeanor. His special fitness above all others to be a cavalry leader was not at that time known, but we were nearing the field where was first established his title to the designation of "Cavalry" Sheridan. The head of the column had reached the junction of the Telegraph road with the Brock pike, near Yellow Tavern, when a rapid and well-directed fire was opened up by a rebel



battery posted on a hill to the left. General J. E. B. Stuart, with his Confederate Cavalry Corps, had thrown down the gage of battle, and it was promptly taken up. He was upon his chosen ground, well sheltered, with every advantage of position. In the action which followed, our whole corps was engaged, and every point within our lines was under fire.

Here again, even more than in the Wilderness, we were fighting an unseen enemy. We could hear and feel, but but not see him. The rebel line was stretched from the pike, along a range of hills skirted by woods, circling around and crossing the Telegraph road. The pike and railroad along which we had been moving ran over nearly level or only slightly rolling ground, and but for a scrubby growth of bushes to the left of the railroad, which afforded some concealment, was entirely open to the enemy's view. Our line was formed with the 2d Division (Gregg's) upon the right, the 1st Division (Torbert's) in the center, and the 3d Division (Wilson's) upon the left. Skirmishers were thrown out, followed by lines of mounted and dismounted men, who pushed across to the woods and secured a lodgment. From the offensive the foe was compelled to assume the defensive. No time was given him to arrange his squadrons for assault. It was an enlivening spectacle to behold in all directions over the field regiments or brigades upon the trot or gallop in columns of fours, companies, squadrons, or battalions, with batteries galloping into position, and here and there reserves drawn up in line, as straight and motionless as stone walls. All this was observed while the 1st Brigade of the 1st Division was moving up under a brisk artillery fire to engage in close combat. Passing by a long line of Confederate prisoners and over ground strewn with the wrecks of battery wagons, dead men, and horses, evidencing hot and effective work on the part of the 2d (Merrit's) and 3d (Devin's) Brigades, we struck the cover of the woods. Into these the 5th and 6th Michigan Regiments were sent dismounted, the 7th was formed in line of battle facing

the woods, while the 1st Regiment was formed in columns of squadrons fronting to the right. This latter was a full regiment of one thousand men, having recently veteranized and returned with ranks filled. The woods formed a reversed T, behind the lower short arm of which the two regiments were sheltered. At the upper end of the T, upon high ground, at the edge of the timber, was a Confederate battery of artillery which had got the range of our position and was sending in its shots with most annoying accuracy. Placing himself at the head of the 1st Michigan, General Custer led it in a charge against the battery. As the squadron wheeled to the left around the angle of the woods at the gallop, they preserved their alignment perfect, and with lusty cheers launched out upon the charge over a surface broken by ravines, but open to the clean sweep of the enemy's guns. Fiercely roared the battery, never were pieces served with more celerity. Solid shot and shells, grape, and canister, tore through the ranks, making gaps, but the column never paused or faltered for an instant. The cheers swell into a shout of triumph. The rebel guns are limbered up, and away they go on the run, but two are overtaken and captured, together with two limbers filled with ammunition, and many prisoners. What, however, was of more importance, was the fact that this brilliantly executed movement had secured an eminence commanding the rebel position, and practically settled the issue of the battle. Its success would hardly have been possible had it not been for the vigorous attacks of the 5th and 6th Michigan dismounted in the woods, the 1st and 2d Brigades, and the rest of the troops all along the line, giving the enemy full employment, and preventing him from instituting a counter movement to render nugatory the effect of the charge. And herein was first manifested the special military genius of General Sheridan, which was, having his forces well in hand to strike the foe "tooth and nail," "horse, foot, and dragoons," put him on the defensive, force him back, and when once started



CUSTER'S CHARGE AT YELLOW TAVERN, VA., MAY 11, 1864.






keeping him going, hitting him blow upon blow as long as within reach.

The 7th Michigan, in column of fours, upon the trot, followed in the wake of the 1st Regiment. As the former regiment passed along, a house situated about a hundred yards to its right burst into flames, ignited by the enemy's shells. The occupants, consisting of women and children, who had probably been in hiding in the cellar for security, rushed out in a state of the most frenzied terror. Their frantic cries and actions were most pitiable. They were, indeed, brought to a full realization of the horrors of war. A wall of fire was behind them, a trampling mass of cavalry in front, while deadly missiles were flying all around. Some compassionate souls galloped out from the column and shouted to them that a ravine near by afforded the most secure retreat, but this was all in the way of succor the exigencies of the occasion permitted. They were probably too crazed to heed the kindly suggestions offered. They were lost to view in the onward movement, but they hold a place in memory as one of the most striking features of that day's memorable engagement.

## CHAPTER III.

BATTLE OF YELLOW TAVERN CONCLUDED—THE CHARGE AND CAPTURE—GENERAL J. E. B. STUART MORTALLY WOUNDED—A PURE PHILANTHROPIST—ON THE MARCH TOWARD RICHMOND—LIEUTENANT HILL'S MARE.

ENERAL CUSTER was upon the summit of the hill from which he had dislodged the Confederate battery, his graceful figure erect in the saddle and his face flashing with the glow imparted by participation in the successful charge, but just concluded. With outstretched arm he pointed with his saber toward a road at the base of the hill, and said: "Major Granger, charge that road with your 7th Michigan." Instantly rang out the major's command: "*Front rank, SABERS! Rear rank, PISTOLS! Fours forward, TROT, MARCH! GALLOP!! CHARGE!!!*" Down the hill, across the brook, and up the road, into the woods, like a thunderbolt went the column. Almost continuous discharges were blazed out from the enemy's carbines, smoke and dust enveloped all in a cloud, and horses and riders were blended. A barricade and obstructions in the road were lightly leaped, and the enemy behind them sent scurrying back in the hottest haste. Into the fugitives crowd the pursuers, and the dull thuds of sabers descending upon hapless heads could be heard amid the rattle of carbines and cracking of pistols. But, just as the head of the column was well over the barricade, the junior major, from the rear, shouted an order to "*Right about, WHEEL,*" which order was heard and obeyed by all but about twenty-five (25) men who followed in the lead of the senior major commanding. Back went the regiment while the squad in the front kept right on in its career. Now the clatter of hoofs, the clangor of slung carbines, empty scabbards

and mess utensils, the shouts, oaths, and imprecations of the rushing horsemen have grown faint. The carbines no longer speak in volleys, but singly, at intervals, and the crack of the pistol has ceased to be lively. The gallant Granger, as well as many another brave man, has fallen and will ride no more to battle, while the survivors of the squad have been engulfed, swallowed up in the Confederate cavalry of the army of Northern Virginia. Here and there one may be seen subject to the hostile demonstrations of numbers of opponents. Surrounded and hedged in, isolated from each other, all hope of escape cut off, submission was made by each one singly to peremptory demands of surrender, only, in several instances, to be shot down or cut down by new comers constantly arriving upon the scene. Back along the route of the charge lay strewn, promiscuously, dead and wounded Federals and Confederates—the latter preponderating. Plunderers were already busy among the former. What, however, is entitled to the greatest prominence in connection with the spirited dash under description was the fall of General J. E. B. Stuart, the Confederate chief of cavalry, mortally wounded. The particulars concerning it will be presently narrated.

A large burly officer, heavily bearded and swarthy, whose position, as subsequently ascertained, was that of a lieutenant on the staff of General Stuart, made demonstrations with an old-fashioned self-cocking "Allen" revolver directly at the head of one who yet lives to record it. Although the latter had long been imbued with the impression that this instrument of death was far more dangerous at the breech than at the muzzle, he did not neglect to make an obeisance with every one of the several times it was snapped at him. When, however, by counting the "clicks," the evidence was unmistakable that no load was contained in it, there seemed to be no further incentive to such kind of exercise, and, in order to arrest the automatic action upon the trigger, the inquiry was ventured as to whether or not the "Colonel" carried any tobacco upon his person. In an abstracted, dumb-

founded sort of way the weapon, risky at both ends, was returned to its holster and a whole plug of prime Lynchburg was drawn forth from an inner pocket. When asked if he had any objections to parting with the half of it, the officer generously said, "Help yourself, sir." He then grew confidential. He remarked that the provost guard and the prison authorities in Richmond were "the d—est thieves and robbers in the world, who had



grown rich by plundering prisoners." Therefore, if any thing valuable was possessed—money, watches, or jewelry—it had better be turned over to him for safe-keeping, as he was going up to Richmond in a week or two, when he would restore it in person. The rectitude of his intentions was not questioned in the least,

but while he talked the pocket-book, with what money it contained, was being crammed through a break in the pocket to a position between the drawers and the skin. With a smile, which "was childlike and bland," he was assured that nothing was possessed worth taking. "Now, don't be guilty of any falsehood," said this honest man, "for I only volunteer to take it to save it for you and to keep it out of the hands of those devilish sharks." He felt of the different pockets with his hands, and insisted that all their contents should be shown him so that he could judge whether or not there was any thing likely to gratify the cupidity of unprincipled men. A showing of the pockets not revealing any treasures, his eye rested upon the haversack, which he gallantly detached from the person, remarking: "They will take this sure, and so I will save it for you and bring it in to you when I come up to Richmond, if I live to get there." How he was yearned for in Richmond, yet never came, and was mourned for as one dead. That haversack contained, among other things, about three pounds of the finest ham that ever



mortal fate, and there will always exist a void in one human system because of its loss.

Besides the retreating column directly in our front, which was hurled back from the barricade, the Confederates were in force in the woods immediately to the left of our line of charge. Apparently about one hundred feet from the road, and a few hundred feet to the rear of the barricade, was a battle flag with a number of horsemen grouped about it. From this quarter we received a galling fire, and returned it with our revolvers. The ground rose considerably toward the left, making objects in this direction, during rifts in the dust and smoke, more conspicuous. General Stuart was near that battle flag, and there he received his death wound. Shortly after the charge had ended, a Confederate soldier came galloping up through the woods, spreading the intelligence that General Stuart was shot. In answer to an inquiry if it were true, the aide upon the general's staff replied: "Yes, d——n you, and we ought to kill every one of you." In response to the question as to where the general was when shot, he pointed with his hand in the direction of the battle flag, and said: "Right down there in the woods." It was characteristic of the man that he was always at the point of greatest danger. Pollard, in his "Lost Cause," erroneously gives the date of the action of Yellow Tavern as May 10, 1864, instead of the 11th, and says that Stuart fell while leading a column in a desperate charge. There was a Confederate column of fours behind the barricade in the road, which gave way before the assault of the 7th Michigan, and through which those in the front of that regiment charged. It is not improbable that General Stuart had formed this column with the design of leading it out to the charge, in the endeavor to regain the position from which Custer had dislodged his artillery. He must have realized that, unless he could again occupy and hold that summit, the day was lost to him. The onslaught of the 7th Michigan and the renewed activity of the dismounted forces in the woods nipped any such project in the bud, and the fall of General Stuart just at that time

put it at rest forever. There was not a single charge of a Confederate column that day, certainly not within the observation of those who belonged to the 1st Brigade.

In obedience to the directions of the officer of the provost guard, our Pegasus was dismounted, and the march on Richmond was resumed—only it would be more appropriate to call it a rush. Our batteries had opened a very rapid and uncomfortable fire, and our guard of honor became concerned for our safety. “Run, Yanks,” was the exhortation; “for if you uns shoot we uns, we uns ’ll shoot you uns.” Eight prisoners, wounded and lame and weary, struck out at their level best; but neither they nor the provost guard could make head against the mass of demoralized cavalry and artillery that fled terror-stricken from the shot of our guns. We narrowly escaped being trampled to death; so we got out of the way of the fugitives, and in the rear of a wagon train. In the midst of a drenching rain, in the darkness of the night, we floundered through the Virginia clay toward the Confederate capital. Although it was only about ten miles distant, such was the activity of our cavalry, and such detours were necessary to avoid them, that an almost steady march of two nights and days was required to reach it.

One of the little company of unfortunates was 2d Lieutenant (afterward Captain) Geo. W. Hill, of Company H. Previous to the commencement of the campaign, he had furnished himself with a war steed in the shape of a little sorrel mare. He petted, caressed, and talked about the animal

so much that it was known in the regiment as Hill’s wife. When the charge was spent, and we were receiving distinguished consideration from several Confederate gentlemen, who should come along but Hill, with the mare beneath him, running like a scared deer. But he came “not as the conqueror



comes.” He was sawing on the bit reins with both hands,

his body swaying from side to side, while the breeze, which quartered slightly from the south-west, whispered softly, "Confound you, won't you whoa?" A number of rebels were riding a tilt with him, and, as one aimed a saber blow to sever his head from his body, the mare shied to one side, making Hill describe a spread-eagle and alight upon his head in a stubble field. There he remained as one dead. Zip, zip, zip, zip, rained the bullets around him, reinforced by invitations to "Come out of there, you Yankee s——o——b——," too touching to be resisted. He rose right up, and suffered himself to be introduced to the provost guard. Upon making the first halt in the precipitate march, where we had time to catch breath, the question was put to the lieutenant if the parting with the mare was not to him the hardest feature of the capture. "Blast the dodgasted mare; if it hadn't been for her, I would not have been here," was the reply. "I heard an order to wheel about, and I tried to obey it; but the dodgasted mare went cavorting about and whirling round and round, drawing upon me the fire of both skirmish lines, and then she struck a straight shirt-tail for the rebs." He added, in a tone of deeper disgust: "You can't make a war horse out of a mare, no how; nobody could." Here he expectorated upon the ground in an emphatic way, took a reef in the waistband of his pants, and rendered the air blue with his further remarks. The subject was never again alluded to, since there is a limit to what a man can endure and not become a raving maniac.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE PROVOST-GUARD AND THE TEAMSTERS—A SOUND SLEEP—  
INDEPENDENT JEHUS—ENTRANCE INTO RICHMOND—LIBBY  
PRISON—THE RATION AND ITS EFFECT—THE OCCUPANTS OF  
THE DARK CELL—THE OUTLOOK FROM LIBBY.



THE teamsters would not allow us to take advantage of the little assistance which a hold with the hand on the feed troughs at the back of their wagons would afford. The provost-guard, on the whole, were quite humane men. They permitted us to hold onto their stirrup straps when there was no body of Confederate soldiers to observe it, and some of them even dismounted at times to let the more crippled of the prisoners ride. They saved us annoyance and abuse as much as possible by avoiding Confederate troops, or by hurrying us along when we did come in contact with them. The sergeant of the guard was from Williamsburg, Va. He was an original Union man, but, as in the case of a great many others, had been carried into the war by the state ordinance of secession and the intimidation of rampant secessionists. The Southern people were heartily tired of the war, he said. The pay of soldiers, from the depreciation of their currency, was not enough to supply them with tobacco. Their families were entirely dependent upon themselves—upon what the women and children, with the negroes, could gain from the soil. The only persons in the Confederacy who were in the enjoyment of any thing like plenty and luxury were those engaged in blockade running, the army contractors, the officials about Richmond, and those who had charge of prisons for United States soldiers. Officials connected with the Richmond prisons appeared to be the most prosperous individuals in the Confederacy. They



displayed a profusion of jewelry, were gorgeous in dress, consequential in bearing, and scattered money with a lavish hand. The sergeant further remarked that the mass of soldiers at the front knew little or nothing of the military situation. They only knew that the tide of war had rolled back and forth over Virginia for long years, and that they were being borne back upon Richmond again with less reserves to draw upon than ever before. They saw no prospect ahead, scarcely hoped for any good result from fighting, and only supported the struggle because they were uncertain as to what would be their fate if vanquished. It was the common idea that in such event their property would be given to negroes, and they would become subject to all sorts of outrages and indignities. These were the impressions of the majority of the real fighting men of the South, in whose looking forward to judgment mercy was not comprehended, but strict justice solely. What, therefore, should have been their appreciation of the magnanimity of the terms of final surrender accorded them?

About midnight of the first night's march, the brigade of General Wickham was encountered. A personal appeal was made to the general for transportation for wounded and exhausted prisoners of war. He was considerate enough to order the teamsters to take us into their wagons, which they did, but with very bad grace. It had been beforehand resolved, with Lieutenant Hill, that if we could secure a place in a wagon an attempt at escape was to be made by jumping out at a narrow cut in the road, where the guards could not ride alongside, and running into the woods. Had our strength been equal to our intentions, we should probably have succeeded. But we had no sooner climbed into the wagon than sleep placed its seal upon us. The remainder of the night is a blank. To our great chagrin, our eyes opened upon a teamster prodding us in the stomachs with the butt of his whip handle, and a bright sun streaming in our faces. A tired soldier can sleep under almost any circumstances—on the march, on foot or horseback. Yet the least jar or

loss of equilibrium will arouse him. Our rest, however, seemed a fated one. In an army wagon, on a forced march, over a Virginia mud road, in a pouring rain! From the "chug holes" and inequalities of the road, we must many times have been thrown roughly from side to side, and rolled over each other, without being disturbed even to the disquiet of a dream.

The teamsters in the rebel army appeared to be independent of military control, and were treated with a much greater degree of deference than the same class of worthies in our army. They owned their teams, and evidently considered that their welfare was the matter of most important concern to the Confederacy. At Bethel Church a captain and A. Q. M. desired forage and supplies conveyed to a certain point. Addressing the teamsters as "Gentlemen," he did not command but requested them to undertake the transportation. They positively refused in language profane and emphatic. The officer entreated. It was the order of the general, he said, and he would be held responsible for its fulfillment. The teamsters replied that they would see both the general and himself in the abode of the evil one before they would put such burden upon their stock or run the risk of capture. As the officer continued to urge the service in more beseeching terms they became more abusive, until it seemed probable that they would have offered him personal violence if he had not desisted and ridden away. Astonishment was expressed to the sergeant of the guard at the insubordination witnessed, and the lack of authority on the part of the officer, when he observed that the teamsters were not altogether wrong. They were men who commanded respect in their home communities, they owned their teams, and practically received nothing for their service, and now, when every man's toes were being trod upon as regards property rights, there was yet a limit, and it might not be best to push the transportation furnishers too hard.

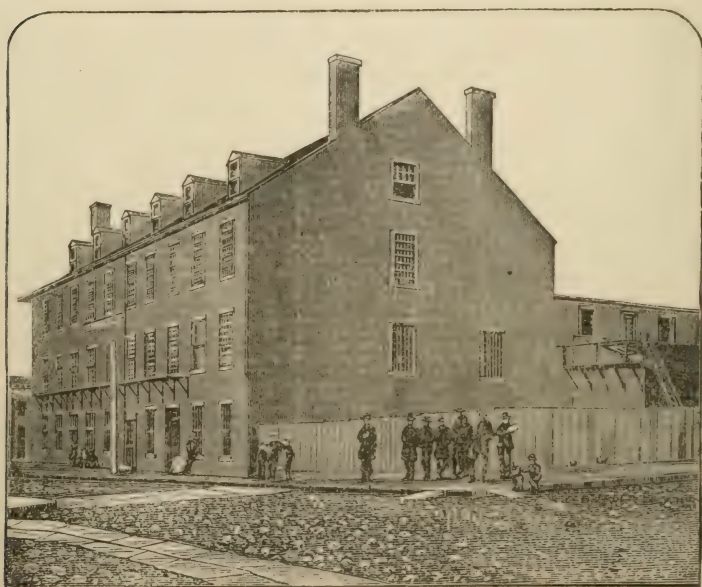
Space will not permit a detail of all the incidents of the capture and the march. In regard to personal treatment, it will suffice to say that perhaps we were fortunate in

having to undergo the hardships of a hurried march. At the outer defenses of Richmond we were met by a howling mob of soldiery. Three negro men who had been found hiding in a field, whence they had been driven through fear of the contending forces, brought up our rear. We were greeted by shouts of, "Hang the d——d Yanks!" "Kill the Yankee s—— o— b——s!" "Did you ketch them d——d niggers with the Yanks?" "Kill the d——d niggers!" The guards pressed us forward at the double-quick, but the colored men were left behind. What became of them is a matter that we did not care to be inquisitive about; we felt very well satisfied that we had escaped the tender mercies of the crowd into whose hands they fell.

Our entry into Richmond was somewhat in the nature of an ovation. A very considerable number of people were abroad in the streets to receive us. "We all love you all, and are going to keep you with us," was a sentiment proposed and appropriately responded to. "Now you have got to Richmond, we hope you will like it," was another. "You won't be lonesome long, for General Lee will bring in all your friends to see you." "You uns is fools to try to fight we uns," etc., etc. Epithets too vile to mention were hurled at us, often by women, too, and menaces were made. Some sympathetic faces and expressions there were, and inquirers after friends in the North, but all these were roughly warned away by the guards. On the way to our destination we passed "Castle Thunder," from the balcony of which a nondescript shape made us a salutation, and, with some misgivings, we gravely returned it. It was Doctor Mary Walker.

The afternoon of May 13th, we were ushered into Libby Prison, going first into the office, where every thing of value, which had not been secreted beyond detection, was taken from us, and then we were escorted up stairs to our quarters. This famous place had recently been deserted by reason of the removal of the former inmates to Macon, Georgia, and it had undergone a pretty thorough renovation by scrubbing and whitewash. A few of our old com-

rades, who were in the Kilpatrick raid, yet remained in occupancy of a dark cell, but they could not greet us. We received a hearty welcome, however, from twelve to fifteen officers, mostly belonging to the cavalry arm of the service, who had arrived but a few days in advance of us. Their companionship was all the cheer we had, and for the third night we laid ourselves down supperless to sleep. The booming of General B. F. Butler's guns, down at Fort Darling, could be plainly heard, which, together with



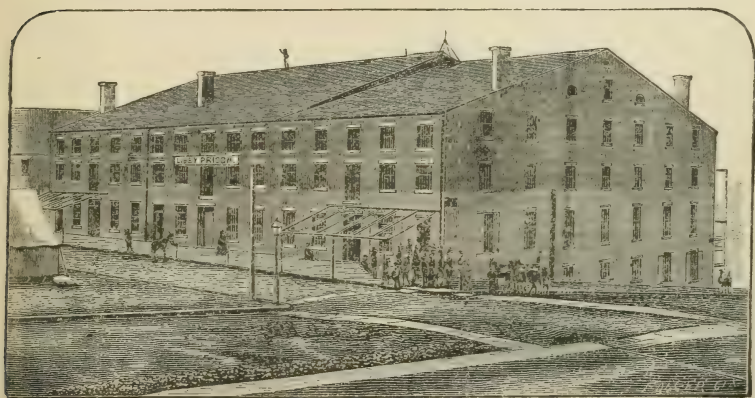
CASTLE THUNDER.

reports of his steady progress, communicated by the sagacious contrabands, kept us on the *qui vive*, and served as meat and drink. But the comfort from this source was of short duration, for one evening Beauregard sent in nearly all the officers of a Massachusetts regiment, with others from Butler's command, to be "bottled up" in Libby. The military situation then interested us no more: belts were tightened over receding abdomens, and our serious



and undivided attention was bestowed upon the prison ration.

The daily ration, per man, consisted of a piece of corn bread two inches thick by two and one-half inches square, simply mixed with water, without salt, and baked; bean soup, which was made up of brown beans, black bugs, and long brown worms, in about equal proportions, suspended in a liquor having the color and much of the flavor of tan-vat water. Once in five or six days just a taste of maggoty bacon was issued, and in lieu of corn bread we sometimes received a proportionate quantity of corn meal, with a very little rice. The pangs of hunger were not sufficient



LIBBY PRISON—FRONT VIEW.

to introduce the soup into the favor of palates which yet retained the smack of the choicest old Virginia hams, chickens, and honey. It was partaken of so sparingly that it was withdrawn. This ration was cut down one-half after the first week. Thus we were restricted to corn bread with so slight a taste of bacon, that, rancid and *lively* as it was, it was a matter of discussion whether it were real or imaginary.

This regimen affected first the mental state, as manifested during sleep, in dreams. The period of repose supplied a continual phantasm of excursions in quest of food, or of gorgeous banquets, at which the sleeper never failed

to become surfeited. Then, during the waking hours, supervened restlessness; an almost unceasing walking up and down, searching with the eyes every inch of the walls, ceiling, and floor, although it was perfectly apparent that plain brick walls and floors, and open, unplastered joists, which had been thoroughly explored numberless times before, could not change their appearance; could show no hiding place or secret passage, could afford no succor, comfort, or any hope of escape. But this aimless moving—seeking—was not to be resisted.



LIBBY PRISON—SIDE VIEW.

The moral sense suffered notable perversion. The prisoners possessed as high and true an estimate of honor and propriety as any like number of men gathered from any walk in life. The blunting of moral principle was exhibited by a disposition to purloin any thing which might minister to the demands of hunger either directly or by purchase. The bacon rind which, by unanimous consent, was reserved to grease the skillet for frying cakes,

and which, by use, became begrimed and charred, was regularly stolen. Its preservation necessitated the appointment of special guardians, who had daily to give proof of their fidelity to their exalted trust. Any little article which might be sold to the guards for Confederate money was very sure to be appropriated by those having no rightful ownership. Many, indeed, were guiltless of these irregularities; but, perhaps, suitable chances for indulgence were not afforded them. The fact, however, that possible opportunities would find inward justification by reasons of special personal application out-weighting the apparently fair-considered needs of others, in a certain degree, favors what has been affirmed by some evolutionists, that the moral attributes of man, the development of a higher cerebral organization, sink to the brute level when the individual is placed in a state of abject privation. The general observations contained in this paragraph pertain to our prison life at other places as well as Libby.

As we became thinner under the consumption of adipose tissues, the angularities and protuberances of the bony skeleton grew into prominence. This interfered with rest on account of the difficulty of comfortably adapting the inequalities of a lean human body to the plane of a hard, level floor. An almost continued shifting of position told that it was impossible to equalize pressure long in any situation suitable to wholesome slumber. Soreness and aching took hold on the more salient osseous projections all over the frame. The physical strength rapidly declined and the gentle exercise of walking about the room sensibly increased the respiration and the heart's action.

The prisoners in the dark cell were Lieutenant-Colonel A. C. Litchfield and Captain John A. Clark, of the 7th Michigan Cavalry; Major E. F. Cooke and Surgeon Kingston, of the 2d New York Cavalry; Lieutenant R. Bartley, of the U. S. Signal Corps; Captain T. Thornton, of the 5th U. S. Volunteer Cavalry (colored); Lieutenant R. Titus, 3d U. S. Colored Troops; and Lieutenants Brown and Coleman, of the 5th U. S. Colored Troops; together



with four negro soldiers. The cell they occupied was upon the ground floor, and it was about twelve feet square. The windows were boarded up, and the only light they had was such little rays as stole in through the crevices between the boards. An open tub was placed in the room for the reception of their excrement, where it was permitted to remain for days before removal, making the atmosphere of the place most noisome. Communication was had with them through the floor above, by the removal of a section of flooring board. News, and such creature comforts as the other prisoners could furnish, were transmitted to them through the hole which appeared when the board was raised. The authorities suspected that there was some connection between us, and they often made search for the passage. But we always managed to be standing over the board, or succeeded in diverting their attention from it, so that it was never discovered. One morning, the guard came in while the board was up and a conversation was proceeding through the opening. The



board was quickly replaced, a blanket jerked over it in a careless way, and when the guard reached the spot, the officer was innocently engaged in hunting the blanket for graybacks. In this miserable den, they were kept for four and one-half months—the cavalry officers because they had participated in Kilpatrick's raid,

the officers of the colored troops because they were such, and the negroes simply to discommode and annoy the rest. They were not allowed to receive any letters or any thing else, or to send any thing out. No plates, knives, forks, or spoons were supplied to them, and when the scanty, filthy ration was brought in, they were formed in line an officer and a negro alternately, and compelled to eat in the presence of the guard in the best way they



could. They all became sick, but it made no difference in the established order of treatment. They were left to their own unaided powers of recovery or to die—no sick privileges for them. Toward the latter part of July, they were sent to join us at Macon, and thereafter they received the same treatment as the other prisoners.

The outlook from Libby was not very extensive. At the rear, we could see the James river and the canal, with a gunboat in it. Opposite the front of the building were some vacant lots, which permitted a view of a street sev-




INTERIOR OF LIBBY PRISON.

eral squares away, which was located upon high ground, and appeared from its direction to run down to the James river. Over this street passed from the south one bright May day, a reinforcement of about ten thousand men—infantry and artillery—for Lee's army. They awakened great enthusiasm in the populace of Richmond, who lined the thoroughfare, greeting them with cheer upon cheer. The ladies supplied flowers in profusion, with which the muskets and cannon were gaily decorated. They had the bearing of veteran troops, and well did they deserve the warmest reception the citizens of the Confederate capital could give, for never was there greater need

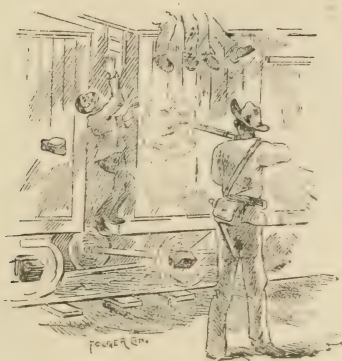
for them. It was an exhibition of life we were not altogether displeased to behold, for it was interpreted as an indication of warm work at the front, and of a depletion in the rebel ranks necessary to be filled. The windows and doors of Libby were guarded with vertical bars of iron fixed to the frames. There was little danger of the prisoners tampering with them, for there was little prospect of escape in that direction. Yet we were not allowed to approach close to them in front, for whenever a guard upon the outside could view a prisoner, he threatened him with his musket. One day, Captain Vaughn, of the 1st Maine Cavalry, who was standing a few feet from the front door on the second floor looking out upon the street, unconscious of danger, was fired upon; but luckily the ball imbedded itself in the ceiling above, without harming him.

## CHAPTER V.

EN ROUTE TO MACON, GEORGIA—CRUELITIES TO ENLISTED MEN—A BRUTAL OFFICER OF THE GUARD—COLIC—CONFEDERATE ECONOMY—NATIVE CURIOSITY—ARRIVAL AT MACON—THE PRISON CAMP—RATIONS AND BARTER—CALLING THE HOURS.

HAPPILY, our stay in Libby was only of eighteen days' duration, for, on the 31st of May, we were set in motion for Macon, Georgia. The inmates of the dark cell were left behind, and also one officer of our party, who was sick. With this exception, we were in fair physical health, though of course very weak and "badly demoralized." Seven hundred enlisted men, bound for Andersonville, accompanied us in the train. Many of them were extremely feeble from sickness and wounds, so that they could scarcely creep along. Yet their pitiable state did not call from the guards any manifestation of mercy. If, from inability to keep up, one fell out of the line when we changed cars, he received blows from muskets or bayonet stabs until he was totally disabled, or his comrades took him up and carried him along. Several of them were shot for getting out of the cars to attend to the calls of nature. They were crowded into the cars closer than hogs are packed for railway transportation in the North. The inside guards were so discommoded by the crowding that at Salisbury they joined with the prisoners in urging that some be permitted to ride on top. Accordingly, liberty was given to six or eight in each car to climb on top. Just as the train started, an enfeebled man was standing on the bumpers between two cars, doing his best to make his way up. The officer in charge, Lieutenant Gay, of the 3d Virginia Militia, saw him, and ordered a guard to

shoot him, which he promptly did, the lifeless body rolling from off the train. This creature, Gay, was devoid



of all human feeling. He was a coward by nature, else he would have been in the field before Richmond, where individuals of destructive tendencies were in demand. At Salisbury, Colonel White, of the 55th Pennsylvania Infantry, with a number of other prisoners, was outside of the car, engaged in a conversation

with a citizen. A young guard came up, roughly laid hands on the colonel's person, and, in language profane, obscene, and abusive, ordered him into the car. An officer in the car remarked to his companions, without intending it to be overheard, that it was a specimen of brutality one would not anticipate from a youth. But it reached his ear, and, facing about, he cocked his gun and pointed it into the car. Hereupon, Captain Carpenter, of the 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry, from Philadelphia, who was sitting upon the top of the car with his legs hanging over the side, said: "Please put down your gun." The guard immediately let down the hammer, and began beating the captain's legs with the barrel. The legs were drawn up out of reach, and it was supposed that, the spleen having thus found vent, the disturbance was ended. Before there was the slightest suspicion of what the young ruffian intended to do, he was on the top of the car with clubbed musket, beating the officer over the head, and saying that he would "learn the d——d Yankee s—— o—— b——" that he could not insult him. The exploit attracted Lieutenant Gay, who inquired of the assaulting guard what was the matter. He replied that "the d——d Yankee" had insulted him. Another guard immediately ventured the statement that he saw and heard it all, and could certify that neither Captain Car-



penter nor the others had committed the least breach of propriety or infraction of rules. Gay angrily ordered him to shut his mouth. He had not been asked for information, and he knew nothing about it. He commended the outrage of the youth, and loudly ordered the guards to "Take nothing from the d——d Yankees. Shoot them at a word." Captain Carpenter was badly injured. He was rendered unconscious, and he suffered with his head during the whole term of his imprisonment. Several citizens, who witnessed the whole transaction, were highly indignant. They assured us privately that the treatment of prisoners was exciting comment and creating them friends who would some day be heard from.

In the course of the journey to Macon we were once or twice served with a bountiful supply of "hard tack" and bacon. In passing through North Carolina, we procured some onions, hard-boiled eggs, dried-apples, and biscuits, which were about as hard and tough as bullets. Upon crossing the state line into South Carolina, the most of us managed to obtain from a guard a drink of that liquid lightning known as North Carolina apple-jack. Such leaven introduced into stomachs previously empty did not fail of an effect. Between Columbia and Branchville, we found our abdominal walls leavened up into the semblance of bass-drums. It was night, and sixty-one prisoners, with four guards at the door, were crowded into one box-car. We had no light, and were literally "spooned in," sitting between each other's legs in rows across the car. The only ventilation was a door upon one side, which was only opened about two feet. Such another cargo was never transported on any railroad before or since—a whole car-load of colic; enough, if properly distributed, to supply the entire population of the country with a first class article. Ho, teamsters of the army, and bullwhackers of the plains! there are expletives never "dreamed of in your philosophy." But the line must be drawn somewhere, and it will be drawn right here. The events of that night may be imagined, they are not to be described. The colonel of a Massachusetts regiment finally discov-

ered a lump of opium amongst his effects. This was passed around in the darkness, and each one in his agony bit off what he thought he could chew. Then we settled back to sleep, "perchance to dream."

An illustration of the economy which was practiced in the Confederacy was furnished by this trip. Between Danville and Charlotte, a halt was made to procure water for the engine. A request was made that we be allowed to have the half of a broken railroad tie, which was lying upon the side of the road, for a seat. The guard replied that the government could not spare it, that they would need it in a few days to repair the road. And he was perfectly honest in his answer. This is only an example of the appreciation they had of their poverty in resources. Every-where, at the front and through the South, was the same scrupulous care for things which, with us, were considered of no account. With them even an old scrap of leather or piece of iron was picked up and treasured for some want it might serve to meet in the future.



At a little station near the Georgia line, where we stopped a short time, a number of the natives gathered around to see the "Yankees." When it was learned that there was a brigadier-general on board, in the person of General Heckman, calls were made for him. The general was con-

siderably surprised when the guard requested him to step to the door, but, thinking there was some one outside who might have known him "befo' the wah," he complied. Imagine his chagrin to find that he had simply been called upon to exhibit himself as a curiosity. The remarks, however, were not uncomplimentary. They only showed that the common people of South Carolina had formed very erroneous ideas of Northern soldiers. They

expressed their disappointment that he did not appear with horns, or thick lips, or woolly hair. He looked very much like their own men, they thought, and if they had not known that he was a Union officer they would have esteemed him as decent an appearing white man as they most ever saw. But the inevitable question was here again propounded, only in a little different form: "Why do you wage war upon us? If you get all our worthless niggers what good will they do you?" As they were not Confederate commissioners, we did not enter upon an exposition of the issues involved in the contest.

We reached Macon the 6th or 7th of June, and were joined to the rest of our officers who were prisoners of war at Camp Oglethorpe. Altogether we numbered about twelve hundred but the number was increased to fourteen hundred during our stay at Macon. The prison grounds were square, and included an area of nearly three acres, inclosed by a tight board fence about twelve feet high, fifteen feet inside of which was a picket fence, six feet high, constituting what was known as the "dead line." This we were not allowed to approach nearer than six feet. Upon the outside of the high board fence, passing all around, was a platform, about three feet below the top of the boards, upon which the guards patrolled back and forth. A small stream passed through one corner of the grounds and a little below where it entered the inclosure, supplied springs of good potable water. Below the springs it was converted into an open sewer by the excrement cast in from stringers and boards placed along over the brook in its course. In the center of the camp there was an old one-story frame building, built upon posts, with a floor in it, about sixty or seventy feet in length by forty feet in width. Besides, there were some sheds from sixty to one hundred feet long and sixteen feet wide, with a roofing of boards pitched toward the sides from a ridge pole in the center. The sides of the sheds were not inclosed. When we arrived all the places of shelter and all the vacant ground, save that portion sloping toward the sinks, were occupied. So, we had to lie upon the ground

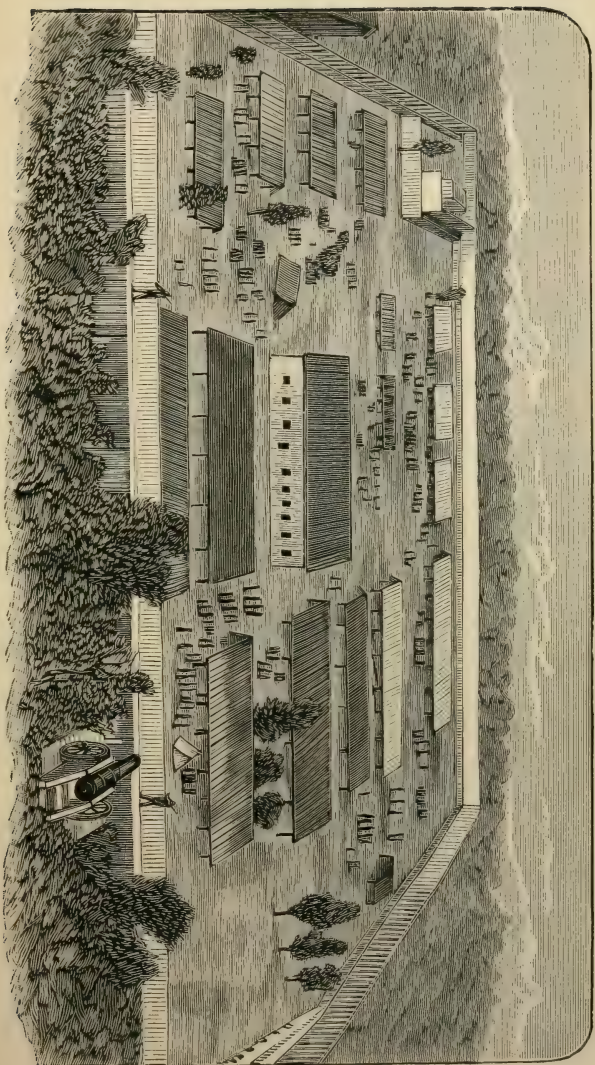


without shelter for ten days or two weeks, until more sheds were built. Ample space for inspection, for passage, and parade separated the sheds. When they were completed, each man was allowed a board sixteen feet long for the construction of a bunk. Sleeping quarters were fixed wherever between the ground and roof it suited an individual's fancy, so that he did not trespass on his comrades.

The ground was nearly level, only at the rear end it declined rapidly to the ravine through which the stream passed. "It never rains but it pours" in this latitude, and as heaven's flood gates opened frequently the flat surface of the camp was often covered to the depth of several inches, to the great discomfort of those who were without shelter, of whom there were always one or two hundred while we remained in Macon. These might keep their persons dry by crowding into the sheds, but there was no way for them to sleep unless they lay down in the water under cover, or upon sand piles outside exposed to the rain, which many of them did. The rain storms, however, were not unwelcome to those in bunks under cover. They afforded opportunity for personal ablution, and many nude individuals could be seen making the most of nature's shower baths. The soil on top was sandy, which soon absorbed the surplus water, and the ground did not become muddy from the rains except upon the slope, where the clay subsoil had been exposed by the washing off of the sand.

At dark the sentries commenced calling the hours, which they continued until daylight. "NINE O'CLOCK AND ALL'S WELL," etc. Instead of announcing the hour in a deliberate, even, and heavy tone of voice, they adopted a quick, sing-song tone, putting the emphasis on "ALL'S," which made it sound ludicrous. In a spirit of mockery, to give them an idea of the charm of their vocalization, we would sometimes catch up the refrain and send it around all over the camp. Then a broadside of choice oaths and epithets would be poured in upon us, with threats of bullets from the more irate of the guards, if there was any further repetition. We had no use for the





CAMP OGILTHORPE, MACON, GEORGIA.



bullets, at least we did not know how we could derive any good from a shower of lead. But we did know that they were only too ready to fire them into us, so when leaden balls were suggested, vocal muscles became suddenly affected with a lead paralysis, and all efforts at vocalization in imitation of the sentinels ceased.

The daily ration per man consisted of one pint of corn meal; a quarter of a pound of bacon; one ounce of rice; one ounce of dried beans, and one teaspoonful of salt. There was a sutler's establishment on the premises, where eggs, beans, potatoes, turnips, onions, flour, bacon, beef, rice, sugar, and tobacco could be purchased for Confederate money. The sutler also bartered for rings, watches, pocket-books, "wild-cat" bank-notes, greenbacks, shoulder-straps, gold lace, brass buttons, and odds and ends in the possession of the prisoners. But, as only a comparatively few of the prisoners possessed Confederate money or articles to barter for it, the majority were hardly any better off for the sutler's presence, except that they might be the recipients of some bounty from their more fortunate comrades. We were badly off for cooking utensils, a skillet with a lid to it, termed a "Dutch oven," and a six-quart tin bucket having to do duty among a great many. In order to be able to draw our rations, we had to make bags out of our underclothes or the lining of our clothing, so that we might have something to receive them in.

## CHAPTER VI.

BRIGADIER GENERALS—GENERAL HECKMAN—SCRAMBLING FOR GARBAGE—A RARE BIPED—FOURTH OF JULY AT MACON—SPEECHES, SONGS—THE STARS AND STRIPES DISPLAYED—AFFECTING AND EXCITING SCENES—“GOD’S FLAG.”



AT one end of the frame building a room about sixteen feet square was partitioned off, which had been set apart for, or been appropriated by, three of our brigadier-generals with some of the members of their staffs. One day a tall, lean, muscular officer from Sherman's army was brought in. Having made the rounds of the place, he found more empty space in this room than anywhere else, and, accordingly, he disposed himself there upon the floor for repose. He had not rested long before a captain and assistant adjutant-general to one of the generals came in, and, shaking up the new arrival, the following conversation occurred:

A. A. G.—Did you know that this is the general's quarters?

New Arrival.—No, sir.

A. A. G.—Well, it is.

N. A.—Well, I ain't a bit particular about my company in here, and I'd just as soon roost with a brigadier-general as any body else.

A. A. G.—But, sir, you will have to move out of here.

N. A.—Will, hey? Who will move me?

A. A. G.—The generals, sir.

N. A.—Just bring on your gigadier brindles. I'm about the liveliest mover they ever saw. I haven't had much to eat for two or three days, and it would feel kind o' good to swallow a brigadier-general or two, buttons and all.



A. A. G.—They will have the guard brought in to move you.

N. A.—Will, hey? Well, my son, don't give yourself any uneasiness about *me*. I am a goin to take a nap and I will be right *here* when the guard comes in. If any body comes round lookin' for me, please to show 'em right in.

The guard did not come in and the new arrival did not go out. The brigadier-generals ignored his presence, and he was apparently as unconcerned about theirs as though they were separated by a thousand miles.

Among the prisoners in our party from Richmond was Brigadier-General Heckman, a major in the regular army, who had commanded a New Jersey brigade in the Army of the Potomac. As already stated, when we got to Macon, the only place for us was the slope descending to the sinks, and here, in the mud, filth, and stench, we were compelled to settle ourselves. We had arrived but a short time when it became known that a general was with us, and a messenger was sent from the brigadier-generals above mentioned to invite General Heckman to share their quarters. This gentleman told the messenger that he (Heckman) took no account of superiority of rank in such a place. What accommodations were accorded to the other prisoners were good enough for him. He was simply a soldier like the rest, and it was his duty to suffer like privations. He asked no privileges for himself from his captors, and he would not place himself in an equivocal position by accepting them.

These same brigadier-generals had every thing to eat that the markets of Macon afforded. For their own special accommodation a garbage barrel was placed outside of the building just beneath one of their windows, to receive the refuse from their table. Officers of all grades below that of brigadier-general have crowded and jostled each other about that waste receptacle, in the struggle to secure an onion top, a turnip or potato paring, or other vegetable refuse, or, perhaps, a rind of bacon, or trimming of fresh meat. In promulgating the orders of the rebel prison of-

ficials, these general officers embodied them in orders of their own, as if to stamp them with approval, and gave them out over their signatures, just as they would have done if commanding troops in the field. The orders were bulletined upon the outside of their quarters, by the side of the front door, and, as time hung heavy on their hands, they took to issuing orders for their own diversion. Hardly a day passed without the posting of several new ones. Most of them were uncalled for and offensive. As coming direct from the prison officials themselves, the joint orders would not have disturbed us, but we resented it as beneath the dignity of Union generals thus to subordinate themselves to a confederate captain, and to command their fellow officers in misfortune as though they were menials to wait upon the beck and nod of their august persons. To say that we looked upon them with contempt but feebly expresses it. They did not remain with us long—only until the 12th of June—when they, with about fifty field officers, down to the grade of major, were sent to Charleston, for special exchange it was said. But few “good-byes” were extended to them when they took their departure. The feeling upon their leaving was doubtless reciprocal—they were probably as well pleased in parting with us as we were in parting with them. Many were of the opinion that it was the antipathy existing toward them on the part of the prisoners which had led to their removal, and that General Heckman, whom all revered, and the field officers, had been taken along as a blind. It mattered not for what they were withdrawn, it was enough to know that they were gone, and no one would ever care to look upon their like again.

There was a second lieutenant of a United States cavalry regiment, who, for volubility and the small amount of sense to the number of words, could be matched against the world. He had an idea that the officers of the regular army constituted the high caste of the country. He himself had been appointed from civil life from Philadelphia, where, he said, his family enjoyed the highest social distinction. He exhibited a superciliousness which would have been unbearable if it had not been ridiculous, and he

was in the habit of speaking of the volunteers as "partisan soldiers." For this he was rebuked at the time of capture by a Confederate general whose good offices he besought on the ground that he was no "partisan soldier." The general remarked that he had infinitely more respect for a man who fought for principle than one who fought for pay, and that when he had any favors to bestow he would always give preference to the former. This *rara avis* conceived a brilliant plan of escape, which was when the cart came in for the camp offal, to crawl into it and lie flat, face downward, upon the bottom of the bed, while some of his companions covered him up with garbage. But he was too long for the vehicle—and he was a good deal like the ostrich hiding its head in the sand—for his feet stuck out beyond the covering. When, therefore, the cart passed through the gate, the guard seized him by the feet, landed him on the ground, and hustled him back through the sally-port in marvelously quick time. Some wags now gathered about and imparted to him the cheerful information that the penalty of trying to escape was death. They told him that as soon as the prison commandant heard of his attempt, he would send in a file of soldiers to take him out and shoot him. They advised him to have his head shaved to the scalp, his face blacked, his clothes turned wrong side out, to dig a hole under the center of the frame building and burrow in it until such time as the rebs should give up hunting for him; all of which he did. At short intervals throughout the day-

time some one would bawl to him under the house: "Lie low, W——; they are after you." He stood it for three days, when he emerged from his hole about as begrimed and dejected as Bunyan's poor Pilgrim when he got out of the slough. As sympathetic souls drew near unto him he exclaimed: "By Jove, gentle-



men; I positively believe if my fathah could see me now,



he would nevah moah acknowledge me as his son, and it would absolutely dwive my pwecious sistah mad to behold me. It is inconceivably shocking. I have resolved the first opportunity that offers to present myself to the comandant, and endeavah to convince him that capital punishment is altogetha too seveah for a small affaih like that." Of course some one let him into the joke, and from thenceforth he was a humbler, if not a wiser, man.

The 4th of July, 1864, will ever remain a memorable day to those who at that time were prisoners of war within the stockade at Macon. The prisoners had crowded in and around the central structure to listen to some speeches in commemoration of the nation's birthday. Captain Todd, of the 8th New Jersey Infantry, displayed a small United States flag, four by six inches—about the size of a man's hand—which he had managed to keep secreted upon his person. The effect was indescribable. The air was rent with cheers, and shouts, and cries. Tears in streams coursed down the cheeks of great, rough, shaggy men as they hugged each other and yelled at the sight of the banner. Those near enough reverently kissed it, and men at some distance away climbed upon the backs of others to get a view of it. "Hold it up," shouted a voice, "don't be afraid; hold it up so that we can all feast our souls upon it. The rebs won't dare to molest it. Hold it up, for while there is a man of us alive to defend it with his hands neither the Southern Confederacy, the powers of earth or hell can touch it." The "Star Spangled Banner" and "Rally Round the Flag" were sung. During the singing some of the older guards were seen leaning tremblingly over their muskets and crying like children. The enthusiasm and noise became so great that the long roll was sounded by the Confederates outside, the artillery was manned, the infantry stood to their guns, and the guards upon the platform faced toward the inclosure with their muskets at the cock. The commandant sent in the officer of the day with a company of troops, who ordered us to disperse to our quarters and remain quiet under pen-



alty of being fired upon if the order was not at once obeyed. There were those who in the ardor of their quickened patriotic impulses strongly urged, all unarmed as we were, a rush upon the company inside, a breaking down of the inclosure, and a charge upon the outside forces. This, of course, would have been sheer madness, for the guarding force outnumbered us two to one, and had bearing on the prison camp seven pieces of artillery. Better counsels prevailed, and the meeting dispersed.

But no rebel guard, or cannon, or muskets, could rob us of the inspiration we received from the sight of that glorious star spangled banner, diminutive though it was. We felt no more hunger, or nakedness, or weakness, or illness that day, and it exalted our hopes and strengthened our faith in the final victory of our arms. It seemed that the feeling by which we were pervaded was but a reflex transmitted to us from the great heart of the nation, and we knew that with the loyal people animated by the spirit which stirred in us, the flag *would* triumph, *MUST* triumph. Those who have never been similarly circumstanced can scarcely have attained to a full appreciation of the majesty of our ensign of the republic. To our eyes "human rights" were emblazoned all over it, as against human power and inhuman practices. It floated before young men, approaching the years of manhood, in the light of a divine revelation. It awakened older men to ideas of the grandeur of the basic structure of our government which they had never realized. If a demand had been made for the emblem, not one captive soldier there, it is believed, who would not have esteemed it the highest glory to have died in its defense, like those immortal heroes of the sloop-of-war, Cumberland, in Hampton Roads, who went down to their rest standing to their guns and saluting the flag. There they yet remain beneath the waves, but they are not dead, and never will die while history lives. They live and will live to kindle the fires of patriotism in thousands of hearts.

An officer was wasting away of chronic disease in one of the sheds to the rear of the central structure. He lay

stretched out upon a rough board, a living skeleton, clothed in tattered, weather-stained rags, and covered with a ragged remnant of a blanket. He heard of the flag, and sent for it. As it was held up before him a strange love-light shone in his sunken eyes, and an unearthly flush suffused his hollow cheeks and temples. He said, between his gasps for breath: "Give me the flag in my hand. God bless it! Let me kiss it. Boys, this is



God's own flag, and I believe He sent it here to-day. I never expected to see it again. You know what it represents to me. I have seen *it*, and it's just the same, and I can die just as happy as though I had seen *them*. My lifeless body will be taken out shortly, and they may plant my bones wherever they please, for our flag, God's flag, will float over them before very long. If a spirit can return to influence living men my spirit will come right back without delay to raise up defenders for that flag." A perfect peace came over him, which continued until he died, that day, it is believed, though it might have been a few days later.

The perfectness, and beauty, and strength of our political fabric, as reflected in the flag, was impressed upon every one there as never before. Not one who could claim the smallest particle of manly soul in him who did not consider the perils and privations he had undergone as simply an experience necessary to afford him the most comprehensive understanding of the great issues involved in the struggle. Although the experience was every thing but pleasant, it was not to be regarded, in view of the great gain derived from it. Congress may make some return to surviving prisoners of war by passing a pension bill for their benefit, but it can not compensate them. The memories of occasions when, as on that

4th of July at Macon, in the white heat of patriotic fervor each soul glowed into a kinship to divinity, are more prized than any annuities the government can grant. Only such inspirations afford any compensation in extremities in which money could not induce men to place themselves.

## CHAPTER VII.

“THE COUNCIL OF FIVE HUNDRED”—THE OATH OF INITIATION—BOLD PLANS OF ESCAPE—BETRAYED BY THE CHIEF OFFICERS OF THE ORGANIZATION.



T Macon, an organization was formed for escape, known as the “Council of Five Hundred.” It was composed of field and staff officers, and five companies of one hundred men each, with the usual line officers. The originators were Lieutenant Wm. Nelson, 13th U. S. Infantry, now captain and brevet major (retired), of Poncha Springs, Colorado, and Captain E. L. Smith, 19th U. S. Infantry, now an attorney at law of Denver, Colorado. It had been fortunate had the leadership been vested in these true and resolute men. Unluckily, however, the plan embraced a “Council of Twelve,” the members of which, having been selected, agreed to meet at a certain time to perfect the organization. Accordingly, when the meeting took place for the election of a leader, Nelson and Smith, although on hand to the minute, did not arrive until Captain —, U. S. Infantry, had been proposed and elected to the chief command.

The ranks were recruited by the organizers and first members telling their friends that a band was being formed for escape which they ought to join. If a desire was expressed to belong to it, an introduction to an officer of the “Five Hundred” followed. This functionary then swore them upon their honor as gentlemen and soldiers never to reveal any thing which he might communicate, or the existence of the confederation. They were then told that the model of the organization was that of the regiment, and the object was as a united force to take advantage of and make effective any opportunity that offered to escape



*en masse*. The members were sworn to obey their officers, and failure to obey commands, or treachery, was punishable by death. The death penalty was to be inflicted by members chosen by lot, and the members so selected were to execute their mission regardless of the consequences to themselves. The death penalty would also be visited upon those who should reveal the existence and purposes of the organization, even though they did not become members. The obligation was binding only as long as they were prisoners of war. If it was found safe and practicable, the membership might be brought up to one thousand. After this information, the individual was at liberty to decline membership or to join, as he saw fit. The form of oath administered to members was about as follows: "I, —, do solemnly swear, in the presence of Almighty God, that, as long as I am a prisoner of war, I will be a true and loyal member of the Council of Five Hundred; that I will obey the officers placed over me, and that, if I should be selected by lot to inflict capital punishment upon a traitor to the organization, I will exert my best endeavors so to do at any and all hazards. So help me God."

It was a fearful oath to take, and its only justification was in the situation. No inquiry was made as to the experience of other members, but one is known who dreaded to go to sleep for many nights after his initiation, on account of the character of his dreams, they were so horribly realistic. The black bean was always drawn by the victim of these phantasms, and there followed a train of horrors—assassination, pursuit, the brand of Cain, together with the pleasing mental introspection inseparably connected with such incidents.

After this oath it was revealed to the newly-made member that four tunnels were being excavated which would have capacity sufficient to let out all the members in an hour's time. Each member was to provide himself with a stout stick or club, in readiness for the completion of the tunnels, which would be announced to him in his quarters the night of the opening, when he was to get up, quietly pass out, and be conducted to the outside rendezvous. No

plan of action was announced upon reaching the outside, but, from the statement being made that many of the guards were in the plot, it was inferred that, with their aid, an assault was to be made upon their quarters, and a capture made of their arms and artillery. All the prisoners were then to be released, armed, and organized.

But, alas! the fallacy of human hopes and plans. Traitors, without or within, informed the prison authorities of the tunnels, and, on the morning preceding the night of opening, the guard marched in, uncovered the tunnels and filled them up. The informer was not known; but a lieutenant of a Missouri regiment was said to be the man, because, shortly after the disclosure, he was taken out and paroled. Vengeance did not fall upon him, as he was beyond reach. It was always so with the traitors to the "Five Hundred;" they all got away, and the "Five Hundred" were "*left*"—in more than one sense.

On the morning of July 27th, the prison commandant announced in camp that six hundred prisoners must be ready in the evening to move to Charleston, S. C. The selection of those who were to go was left to the senior officer of the prisoners, and he was easily prevailed upon by the officers of the "Five Hundred" to favor the members of that organization. Consequently, they at first constituted nearly the whole of the moving division. But as they were moved out into the dead line and halted there, several hours after dark, before marching out, this preponderance was greatly reduced by the other prisoners coming out and crowding up to the front of the line. Pocotaligo Station, on the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, was where all trains between the two places stopped to replenish their water tanks. This place was twelve miles from Pocotaligo Sound, whose waters were patrolled by United States gunboats. Between the station and the sound, the only Confederate troops to dispute the way was an insignificant picket guard. Captain —, of the regular army, was the commander of the "Five Hundred." He had been stationed at Charleston before the war, and had hunted over the whole country around Po-

Pocotaligo. He had caused it to be communicated to the members of his command, that when the train halted at Pocotaligo, a red lantern would be displayed from the front car, in which he was to ride with the ranking officers of the "Five Hundred" and of the prisoners. At this signal, the inside guards, with their arms, were to be seized, and, with the arms thus secured, the prisoners were to jump out and intimidate the guards on top of the cars. In the front car, the boards had all been sawed through from the bottom to the top at the end next to the tender, and when the signal was exhibited, two locomotive engineers of the prisoners were to kick out the boards, spring onto the engine, and assume its management. The telegraph wires were next to be cut, the track torn up, the train run into Pocotaligo creek, and, with Captain — as commander and guide, and the guard as prisoners, a march was to be made to the gunboat. At Savannah, the officer of the guard had discovered the existence of a plot to seize the train, and he demanded more guards, which were not allowed him. After leaving Savannah, he telegraphed back for leave to return the train, as, with the guards he had, he was powerless to prevent an escape; but the orders were for him to go on and do his duty. Every thing seemed favorable for the attempt. In many of the cars, the arms of the guards were held possession of long before the signal was anticipated, while in others, the caps had been removed from the muskets of those guards with whom it was expected there would be much of a struggle to secure their weapons. Yet Pocotaligo was passed, and no signal was displayed. Some discovered that they were beyond the point agreed upon, and fifty or sixty got off in one body without molestation from the guard. Many of these made their way to the gunboat. Others, by twos and threes and





dozens, also got off at various points all the way to Charleston, a few of whom got safely through, but the most were recaptured in a few days.

Lieutenant William E. Roach, of the 49th New York Infantry, was the officer who prepared and had charge of the signal lantern, which was made of a light wooden frame covered with a red handkerchief, and had a short piece of candle for illumination. The statement, as obtained from his own lips, as to what occurred in the front car, is as follows: "The central figures there were Captain —, of a United States infantry regiment, commander of the 'Five Hundred;' Colonel or Lieutenant-Colonel —, of an Illinois regiment, of Chicago, second in the organization to Captain —; another field officer of the organization, belonging to the regular army, whose name is forgotten; Lieutenant-Colonel T. J. Thorp, of the 1st New York Dragoons; Colonel —, of a New York cavalry regiment; and myself. The conversation was carried on in a whisper. Captain — said that the train had already passed the station at full speed, and he was afraid that the plan was foiled. The candle was lit and the lantern was all ready. Colonel —, New York Cavalry, got on his knees, cried like a booby, and in a sniveling, whining voice begged for God's sake and the sake of his family that the signal be not hung out. He said that the guards, with their bayonets stuck in the roof to steady themselves, were massed as thick as they could stand upon the top of the car, with instructions to fire down through in case of any movement or signal. 'Every one of us will be killed,' sobbed this miserable coward, 'and what will become of my poor family?' Captain — and the Illinois colonel questioned whether it were now advisable to give the signal. The former said that Pocotaligo had been passed, and it was doubtful about an escape being now practicable. While they were thus engaged, the train stopped. The Illinois colonel took the signal, and, appealing to the whole car, said: 'Under the circumstances, shall I swing it?' There was an almost unanimous 'Yes,' only a few 'Noes' being intermingled. Col-



onel Thorp took the lantern from Colonel ——'s hands, remarking: 'I will hang it out. It's no matter what happens to us. It would be an infamous breach of faith not to display the signal.' But before he could reach the car door that despicable wretch, the New York colonel of cavalry, seized the lantern and tore it all to pieces. The place of stoppage where the lantern was destroyed answered to the description of, and undoubtedly was, Pocatigo Station."

When Charleston was reached, the superior officers of the "Five Hundred" were sought, and an explanation of their conduct demanded. These precious souls, who had sworn men at the peril of their lives to obey their orders and murder traitors, gave the puerile excuse that to have exhibited the signal would have been to sacrifice the lives of all in the front car. The indignation against them rose extremely high. Captain —— appeared to be overcome with remorse, and declared an intention of committing suicide. An officer remarked that it was the only thing left for him to do, and that it would be a fitting end for one who, but for an act of cowardice and treachery, might have worn stars upon his shoulder-straps. The Confederates very quickly took out Captain ——, the Illinois colonel, and the other officer whose name is lost, and paroled them. It is rather remarkable that neither their names nor that of the Missouri lieutenant before mentioned appear in the list of prisoners appended to the published works of Abbott and Glazier, which were copied from the Confederate register. The fact that they were paroled by the rebels, and were never seen afterward by the prisoners, is pretty conclusive evidence that a bargain existed between them, and that, in being removed from their comrades, the price of their treachery was paid them. Thus ended the organization of the "Five Hundred," which conceived, and would have executed, brilliant designs, but for the frailties of weak human nature.

As for the New York colonel of cavalry, they had use for him as an informer, and he was left with us, no one deigning to notice the despicable poltroon. He had been

distrusted from the first by the prisoners, and could not gain admission to the "Council of the Five Hundred." Colonel —, of the Illinois regiment, accounted for his being in the front car by saying that the New York officer had pushed himself onto him and he could not get rid of him. Probably he was not sent away with the others because he did not desire to be exchanged just at that juncture, since, at the time of his capture, he was under arrest for having furnished false information in regard to a reconnoissance he had been ordered to make to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy, and it is likely he wished to delay facing a court-martial as long as possible. He was also exceedingly well cared for by the Confederates. He could go outside of the camp when he was so inclined, and he never suffered for lack of any thing to eat or wear. At the time of his capture, when the Confederate Colonel Bellinger, of the 1st South Carolina Cavalry, asked him what he was fighting for, he responded that a destitute family had forced him into the army. His heart was with the South, and at —, N. Y., his home, he had made speeches against the war and in favor of the South, and had been egged for so doing. The war sentiment was so strong that he could not breast it; he could obtain no means of livelihood, and therefore he had been driven to find employment in the army in order to feed his family. The rebels took him into favor at once. He had a horse to ride until railroad transportation was reached, and lunches were provided for him at every town through which he passed. When he was exchanged a court-martial found him guilty of furnishing false information in the face of the enemy, and he was cashiered the service. He and the other betrayers of the prisoners ought to have been tried for their unfaithfulness to them, and they should have suffered ignominious death therefor. Had the war continued longer they undoubtedly would have been brought to account, but the end coming so suddenly men's minds were diverted into other channels, and no one thought it worth the trouble to present charges against them.

Lieutenant Roach, who is the authority for the facts above given as to what transpired in the car and what concerns the colonel of New York cavalry, is known to all prisoners of war who were with him, and to thousands of citizens all over the country, both North and South, as a gentleman of unimpeachable character and veracity. There are many who were prisoners of war yet alive at this time who can corroborate his testimony of their own personal knowledge. Moreover, every prisoner, upon common report, is so familiar with the matters set forth that he would not rest more firmly convinced of their truth if he had been personally cognizant of every circumstance thereunto pertaining.

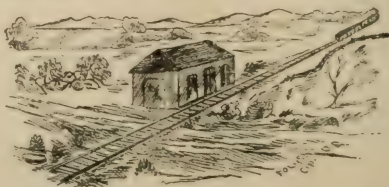
## CHAPTER VIII.

DEPARTURE FROM MACON — NEARLY RE-CAPTURED — VENTILATING THE CARS — PRISON CAMP AT SAVANNAH — RATIONS — TUNNELS AND TUNNELING — THE "CRANK" LIEUTENANT.



IN the evening of July 28th six hundred more were counted out for removal, among whom was the writer, with his mess, belonging to the "Five Hundred" who were cut off from the first six hundred by the crowding-in process mentioned in the previous chapter. There was an unusual movement of trains and excitement on the part of the guards. They seemed undecided what to do with us, and it was four o'clock in the morning before we were embarked on the cars. The cause of the commotion was only discovered about an hour after passing Griffin Station, when we learned that only half an hour after leaving that point General Stoneman's cavalry had struck it and destroyed the railroad. An adverse fate constantly attended us. All our own efforts and those of others for us seemed futile. Later on the information was obtained that General Stoneman had been repulsed in an attack upon Macon, and the general himself, with a small detachment, captured. The remainder of our officers (prisoners) left behind in Macon, about two hundred in number, were removed to a swamp and closely guarded during the attack.

Previous railroad journeying in the Confederacy had taught us that, if we were to have air and opportunities for relieving our necessities, we must obtain these privileges for ourselves and enjoy them surreptitiously. Preparation had been made to this end





by notching the backs of case-knives so as to make them serviceable for saws. With these we made holes in the bottoms of the cars, and as soon as the sun went down, enlarged them sufficiently to permit the passage of a man. Several slipped through these openings and made their escape, but, as we reached Savannah just about dark, there was not opportunity for much of an exodus in this way.

It was the original intention to transport all to Charleston. The experience, however, with the first division of six hundred, changed this arrangement, and we were halted at Savannah, where a pen had been hastily prepared on a part of the grounds belonging to what had been the United States Marine Hospital. This pen or camp was surrounded on three sides by a brick wall about ten feet high, and upon the remaining side by a high, tight board fence. Upon the top of the wall, upon each side, two sentry boxes were placed. The inside boundary of the dead line was marked by a line of posts with a board nailed to the top. The grounds comprised nearly two acres, containing several live oak trees whose shade added greatly to our comfort. One was a magnificent tree, spreading out its branches so as to cover nearly, if not quite, one-fourth of the camp. At one side of the inclosure, close up to the dead line, a deep ditch was dug, with stringers placed across and a single line of boards upon the stringers lengthwise with the ditch. This excavation served as the general latrine, and was daily filled in with dirt. Midway between the sentry boxes, in the center of the dead line, and, at the camp entrance, platforms about five feet high were erected upon which bright fires of pitch pine were kept burning all night. Our water supply was obtained from a well within the inclosure by means of a pump. The water was rather brackish and the well was sometimes exhausted by evening. But the supply was renewed during the night, and, after a time, a liberal water supply was had by the introduction of pipes from the city water-works. Bathing facilities were

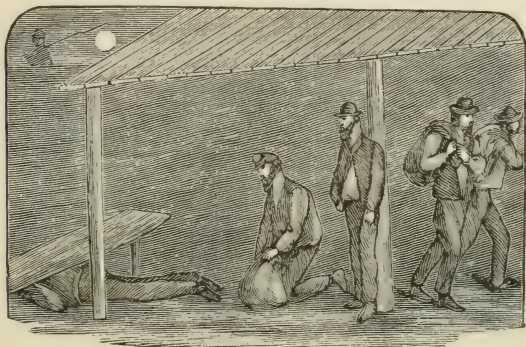
very limited here, consequently we had to take advantage of the rains for thorough personal cleansing.

One "A" tent was issued to six men, which obliged us to form messes of six. One board about twelve feet long was allowed to each man with which to construct a bunk. The bunks had to be set two feet from the ground and to be open underneath, so as to permit free inspection of the ground. This arrangement was designed to prevent tunnelling, but it was a good sanitary measure as well. In building the bunks, we made the central one about eighteen inches higher than the ones at the sides, so that the former might serve as a table and the latter as seats. The tents were pitched over the tops of the bunks, so that they could be opened or let down at the sides according to the state of the weather. The tents were in regular order, in rows, about fifteen feet space being left between the rows, and about four feet between the tents. With the shade of the trees to protect us from the sun, and the good ventilation afforded by the separation of the tents and the fires at night, we were fairly well quartered, though rather closely stowed for sleeping purposes. Of course, we always slept with our clothes on, but even then, having nothing to place under us and only threadbare blankets for a cover, suffered a good deal from cold during the cool southern nights.

Some small brick outhouses on the grounds were torn down, and with the bricks thus obtained, we constructed ovens to bake our corn bread and roast our beef. The ration here was generous and of good quality. The daily amount per man was as follows: One pint of corn meal, one pound of fresh beef, one gill of rice, one-fourth of an ounce of salt, and occasionally a little flour. We were also given some cooking utensils, and, with the ovens, were enabled to cook our food thoroughly and in the most palatable manner. It was the paradise of the southern prisoners. Scurvy disappeared, diarrheal troubles in great measure subsided, the physical condition vastly improved, and the deaths were few. We were strictly guarded, but no defenseless prisoner was murdered by a

guard while here, and there was no special abuse to complain of. We were destitute of clothing and all the ordinary conveniences of life, but we had enough gross food to satisfy hunger. We remained at Savannah until the 12th of September, when we were removed to Charleston, going in the day-time, to our great disappointment.

Reference has been made to tunnels. We were never at any place long until, like rabbits, we commenced to dig. Tunnelling was laborious, for we had no implements



TUNNELING AT MACON.

but case-knives, and such as we fashioned from pieces of boards. The excavations, too, were small, few being over two feet square, and work was consequently carried on in a very cramped condition. A tunnel was generally started under a bunk as near as possible to the "dead line." One foot from the surface the mouth was covered with boards, covered over with the original dirt, and the ground around swept to give it a uniform appearance. Work was usually prosecuted at night, but, when circumstances were favorable, it was also pushed in the day time. The working force consisted of a man to dig, one to scrape the loose dirt into a bag, men stationed at intervals to pass the bag along to the entrance, one in the entrance to pass it to others outside, who bore it away to the sinks. There were also watchers and scouts outside, who gave warning



of any dangerous approach, so that every thing could be put in order, and discovery avoided. There was no trouble in disposing of the dirt, because it was the custom to dig holes every-where in camp for our slops. The dirt was put in a pile by the side of the hole, and every day filled in. The tunnel dirt would be distributed in these sink holes, and then covered over with the old dirt, so that it always looked honest. The force of workers had to be often changed on account of the onerous nature of the work.

At Savannah there was an old well, about twelve feet wide and about thirty-five feet deep, partly filled with water, which had been covered with plank, and filled over with dirt. This afforded a good receptacle for dirt, and a mine which could be worked day and night. A tunnel was run into it from a tent close by. The well was bridged over by a board, and the tunnel continued on the other side. This tunnel was several hundred feet long, and crossed a disused vault in its course, which also served as a receptacle for dirt. It was carried out under a street, and an excavator working there one day found that he had gone nearer the surface than he intended. A small gravel fell from the roof, letting in a ray of daylight. On looking out through the crevice, a chicken was discovered with its head cocked upon one side and its eye fixed upon the hole, as much as to say, "I am watching you, old fellow." Although the seeker after freedom thought that the fowl had him decidedly foul, he did not quail, but made great game over the oddity of the situation. He laughed until nearly breathless, and then made his way back through the tunnel to tell his comrades. An inconsiderate cow, in straying around shortly after, fell into the tunnel, whereupon the authorities came in, uncovered the tunnel, and filled up all the vaults and dead wells. When they uncovered the old well it was found that the plank over which the tunnel operatives had been "coon-ing" it in the dark had a bearing of only one inch upon the opposite wall of the well. Many an enterprising in-



dividual had often, therefore, been within an inch of eternity without knowing it.

There was a lieutenant of First New York Cavalry, who, in an engagement with the enemy, had received a sabre blow upon the head, which was considered to have somewhat disturbed his mental balance, and he was generally regarded as a "crank." He wandered about the




camp at all hours, day and night, picking up leaves, and bits of sticks and cloth, with which he ornamented his button holes. By climbing the trees and other movements after night, he became generally known to the guards, who reported him to the the commandant. He was sought out by either the commandant, or his officer of the day, who

told him that, unless he quit his wandering about at night, he would be shot. The lieutenant, as he straightened up his small spare figure to its full height, observed: "Sir, my life is in your hands. You can find foemen worthier of your steel at the front; but, if you can not rest satisfied until you have killed a Yankee, perhaps I am as good a victim as could be selected." In drawing boards for bunks, the lieutenant also drew his board, but, having at that time no fixed habitation, he disposed of it to Captain —, of the Eighth Pennsylvania Cavalry. Subsequently, some disagreement arose between them, the lieutenant claiming that he had only loaned the board, while the captain held on to it as a gift or a purchase. One morning about daybreak, we were startled by appealing cries of "*Hi, hi, help! HELP!!*" Springing from our bunks, Captain — was found lying on his back in a cold sweat, covering his eyes with his hands, and spluttering, "Don't you drop those live coals in my eyes! Oh, you scoundrel, you would destroy my sight, would you?" At the head of his bunk, with folded arms, calmly looking down upon him, stood the lieutenant. He quietly said: "Captain

——, I am only here to see if you are able to sleep sweetly on my board." "But," responded the captain, "what the thunder were you doing raking in the coal heap at the oven?" "Looking for fire to light my pipe," was the reply. With that the supposed "crank" walked away. The board was returned to him. Captain —— coming to the conclusion that he could rest just as sweetly without it.

## CHAPTER IX.

CHARLESTON, S. C.—THE JAIL YARD—COLORED SOLDIERS—  
DESERTERS AND THIEVES—UNDER FIRE OF UNION BATT-  
ERIES—WRECKING A TENT—ROBBING A SUTLER.

HEN we arrived at Charleston, the evening of the 12th of September, we were turned into the jail yard, a filthy, lousy place, with an insufficient supply of water, and what little there was of it was unfit for use, by reason of its brackishness and warmth. There were a few "A" tents, not nearly enough to afford shelter to all. There was a tent next to the gallows in which an enlisted man from Andersonville was dying of yellow fever. The mess of six to which the writer belonged was assigned to this tent. We sat down upon the outside until the breath left the body, when the corpse was removed and we took possession of the quarters, lying upon the ground, as no boards or bunks were furnished. Our old comrades, who had preceded us from Macon, had been paroled, and were in occupation of Roper and Charity hospitals, where they had good quarters and could procure some of the necessities of life. Many of those who came with us from Savannah were also paroled and sent out to the hospitals—among whom were four of our messmates. The jail yard was surrounded by a brick wall, twelve feet high, upon two sides, and by the work-house and jail upon the other two. The privy-vault was overflowing; we were cut off from the sea breeze, and the sun poured down his fiercest rays upon a sandy soil, producing a stifling atmosphere and heat almost overpowering. Occasionally, a sort of whirlwind would play over the yard, filling the air with fine dust and sand, adding to the misery of our condition.

The ration was scanty, and very poor in quality. The

issue was as follows for ten days: corn meal, five pints; flour, three pints; rice, two quarts; beans, black and full of bugs, three pints; two ounces of bacon, and a small quantity of salt. We only had such cooking utensils as we had purloined and brought with us from Savannah. The issue of wood was scant; not enough to permit us thoroughly to cook our provisions. If our comrades in Roper hospital had not thrown us bread and cooked vegetables over the wall, we could scarcely have weathered through the ordeal of the jail yard.



JAIL AND WORK-HOUSE, CHARLESTON, S. C.

The jail was filled with Union colored soldiers, deserters from both armies, thieves, prostitutes, and murderers. This horde was turned out to mix with us for a few hours every evening. Each of these classes—colored soldiers, deserters, and jail-birds—had their distinctive songs, which, in the early evening, they were accustomed to sing alternately. This was rather enlivening, and we could stand a little of it very well. When, however, they all vociferated at the top of their bent, it was as though pandemonium were let loose. Not infrequently, they kept up



the infernal discord all night. Fond memory only retains the chorus belonging to the favorite song of each :

## COLORED SOLDIERS' CHORUS.

Waiting, weak and hungry ;  
Oh ! how bad I feel.  
Down in Charleston, South Carolina,  
Praying for a good, square meal.

## REBEL DESERTERS' CHORUS.

May the divil admoire 'im ;  
The rattelsnakes boite 'm ;  
Jiff Davis—the crather who brought  
These hard toimes upon me.

## JAIL-BIRDS' CHORUS.—(Twice repeated.)

Then rouse her down, ye jail-birds ;  
Oh, rouse her down, my dear !  
I'm a rollicking rake of poverty,  
And the son of a gambolier.

There was some melody in the negro voices, and they touched the ear very pleasantly. The deserters drawled out their airs in a rich Irish brogue. There was rather too much sameness of sentiment in the different verses and monotony in the measure. When the ear had to submit to the same strain a dozen times repeated, nearly every night, it may not appear astounding that it came to be considered one of the great discomforts of the jail-yard. But the jail-birds' singing was a rasping jingle which harrowed up the soul and set a man to hunting up brickbats, and longing for dynamite or an earthquake.

We were under the fire of our guns on Morris Island, in order to protect the city, it was said. At night, by the lighted fuse, we could trace the winged messengers of destruction, as they sped high over us to create consternation further on. Day and night we could hear their explosions all around, and whenever there was an indication that considerable damage had been wrought we would “make the welkin ring.” We rather enjoyed being under fire, for every “boom,” and every shrieking shot were hailed as messages of joy, bidding us wait but a little longer. We

were only in danger when shots fell short, as only happened on two occasions, inflicting but slight injuries upon two or three prisoners. Our gunners, from long practice, had the range of every portion of the city, and knowing where we were stationed, they threw the shots beyond us.

There was a sutler in the jail with a little stock of bacon, flour, beans, bread, soda, etc., in all worth perhaps about fifteen dollars in greenbacks. The sight of these things to famishing men who had no means with which to purchase but intensified their longing for them, and five or six officers, most of whom belonged to the regular army, decided that if possession constituted nine points of the law the other point might be waived as not being applicable under the statute to hungry prisoners of war, since only civil humanity had been comprehended in the purview. Nevertheless, that it might be rendered absolutely void in any interpretation it might have as against them, they drafted a series of resolutions declaring that Union officers who would rob a sutler were unworthy of the name, a disgrace to the uniform they wore, a lot of low-born wretches, cowardly knaves who would not hesitate to betray the cause in which they were enlisted, and a stench in the nostrils of those with whom fate had associated them. Furthermore, an earnest request, amounting to a demand, was included for a committee of investigation, to be appointed by the prison commandant from among the prisoners, for the purpose of ferreting out the villains who had perpetrated so heinous a crime as the robbery of a prison sutler, to the end that proper punishment might be meted out to the guilty, the claims of justice satisfied, and the stigma of so outrageous an act lifted from their innocent and unfortunate comrades. However, before presenting these expressions of their bursting souls, they first proceeded to reap all the advantage the law assigns to possession by spoiling the sutler of his goods in the dusk of evening. When the commandant entered the prison, in high dudgeon, he was met by the authors of the MSS. and MUSS, who, with indignation in their tones and sorrow in their faces, read off their literature before

him and delivered it over duly signed. Of course it was concluded that only pure souls could thus effervesce, and they were selected to investigate thoroughly into the matter and make a report. They took sufficient time to look into it, so that want of deliberation could not be charged against them, and then reported that, from the way in which the robbery was committed, it was unquestionably the work of experts. Among the officers, who, at home, were men having fixed occupations and character, there were none capable of executing so artistic a job, and therefore they could not have been guilty of it. Besides, no traces of the missing goods could be found about them, and they had no places of concealment. On the other hand, the professional thieves confined in the jail had, since the evening of the theft, been unusually hilarious, which was susceptible of explanation upon the generally accepted idea that high living exalted the animal spirits. Withal the business was directly to their hand, and they were the only ones qualified by long practice to succeed in that line of advanced art. While, therefore, the investigating committee would by no means cast whatever of odium attached to the performance upon any without the most conclusive proof, yet those who, from their previous manner of life, had not placed themselves above reproach, in the absence of any evidence tending to criminate others, could not be passed over without attracting something of suspicion. In conclusion, the committee expressed the opinion that, in the absence of any thing tending to show who were the perpetrators of the deed, it would be manifestly out of place to visit punishment on any parties. They commended themselves for the ardor and care they had exhibited in the prosecution of the investigation and respectfully submitted their report.

The above report served to make all principals and persons connected with the event just about as even as the lapse of a hundred years was capable of working out. The general body of the officers was exculpated, as they should have been. The supposed perpetrators suffered no loss, for they had nothing to lose, either in character or

otherwise, and they received the credit of an exploit their souls would have delighted in. The real delinquents saved themselves from loss and derived some substantial gain. The only other party interested in the issue was the sutler. What loss there was, of course, fell to him. But an increment of experience accrued to him which is beyond estimate, though enough probably to save him in the future from the waste of a large aggregate capital, and thus much more than counter-balance the temporary loss. The report was accepted as exhaustive, and further proceedings were not deemed necessary in the premises.

We were always ready to avail ourselves of any chances to provide for our present and future necessities. Two prisoners in the jail-yard were about shirtless when, upon the morning of the 5th of October, we were ordered to be ready to move to Columbia, S. C., in the evening. The "A" tent we occupied was nearly new, and we saw in it material not only for shirts, but also for shelter in a possible and highly probable emergency. How to become possessed of it was a matter which puzzled us, as the guard was constantly patrolling just back of the tent, between it and the wall.

But the genius to accomplish it was not wanting. As the light of day began to wane, we cut every other stitch throughout two widths clear across the tent. Then, as the shades of evening fell, we began to hurl choice billingsgate at each other




with voices which continually waxed louder and louder. This attracted the guard to the spot, and, the audience thus secured, the show promptly commenced, to his great delight. We buckled to it like prize-fighters, clinched and fell, gouged and bit, kicked the tent poles out, and were covered up in the general wreck. As we emerged from the ruins each one called upon the guard to witness



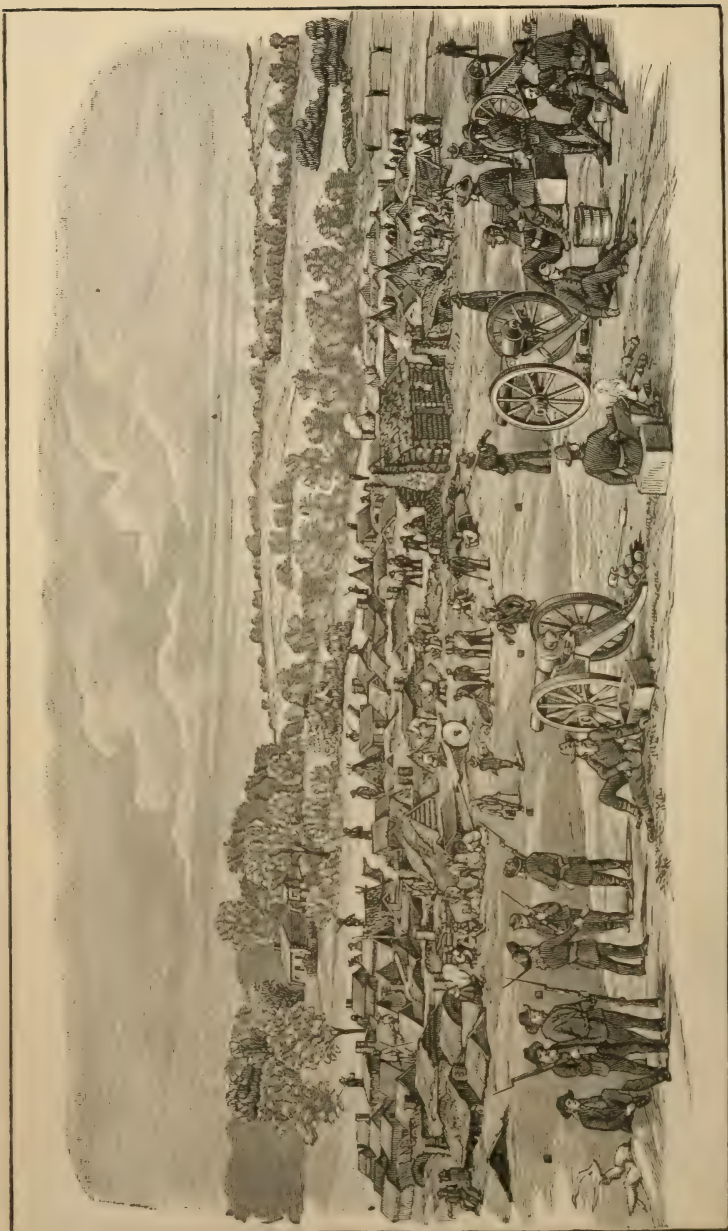
that the other fellow did it. The guard was unable to decide who did it, and he did not care; he was only sorry that such an untoward *accident* had ended his enjoyment of an interesting combat. He marched off to the other end of his beat, and we improved the absence to disengage the loose tent widths, roll them up in our blankets, and spread out the rest of the tent over the ground so that no loss of canvass would be apparent. When the order came to move out we felt as rich as lords, staggering under all we could carry. It proved valuable to us at Columbia as a roof for our "dug out," and as a sort of shelter until this dwelling-place was completed.

## CHAPTER X.

COLUMBIA, S. C.—CAMP SORGHUM—RATIONS—KILLING A HOG—MEAT DEPRIVATION—CONFEDERATE MONEY OBTAINED—SUTLER'S PRICES—BUILDING QUARTERS—A FOUL PLACE—HUNDRED DAYS' MEN—ESCAPES.

COLUMBIA was reached the afternoon of the 6th of October. We were disembarked and corraled in a space between some old tobacco warehouses filled with bacon. A pole was secured, a nail driven into the end of it, and some flitches of bacon fished out. For this heinous offense one of our number received a dangerous bayonet stab in the back from a guard. This was the only meat ration we drew at Columbia, and very few derived any advantage from even that. In the midst of a cold, pouring rain, we were moved into an open lot in the outskirts of the city, where the night was passed lying upon the wet ground without shelter. The next day we were marched two or three miles out of the city, and, for permanent quarters, turned into an open field, having upon it a thin growth of scrubby pines. The weather was rainy and cold, we were in a sorry plight for clothing and shoes, the majority having but shreds of clothing, and many being shoeless. At first for fuel to cook our mush we only had the green pine boughs we broke off of the trees and bushes. Afterward they gave us a little wood. The only ration issued was corn meal, salt, and sorghum molasses. From this last named article the place was dubbed "Camp Sorghum." The sorghum was a good article, but with the corn meal it gave rise to an intense acid dyspepsia and diarrhea, so that we were compelled to throw it away. The corn meal was very coarse, the cob seemed to have been ground





CAMP SORGHUM, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA.



with the corn, and we had to sift it before we could use it. The refuse from the sifting was browned, and a decoction made from it which was our substitute for coffee.

Scurvy, which had about disappeared since we left Macon, under the influence of the diet at Savannah, again became prevalent. No one who has not suffered from prolonged meat deprivation can imagine the cravings which tormented us. Any thing having the appearance of meat would have been greedily devoured and no questions asked. An old "razor-back" boar, as tough, lean, and unsavory as an aged billy-goat, upon straggling into camp, was set upon and dispatched with clubs. The famished prisoners piled upon each other in the struggle to get a piece of the flesh, and hacked it up into little bits with knives. Those



who were fortunate enough to secure a taste esteemed it the sweetest morsel they had ever known. The tops of a pair of cavalry boots, belonging to the writer, which had parted company with the footings, were sold for Confederate money, and part of the proceeds were devoted to the purchase of a quarter of a pound of bacon, with which to season our mush. But the sight of the meat was too much for us, we could not wait the boiling of the water. Each mouth in the mess of five watered over it. It was divided into five equal bits, one to each, and sucked after the fashion of some children with stick candy. All our blandishments were exercised upon dogs roaming in the vicinity of the camp to entice them in. Two bloodhounds killed in camp were hurriedly interred in an old well hole to prevent detection. When the guard came in soon after and unearthed them their carcasses were besought and refused with profane denunciations.

About the middle of November, speculators from Charleston, who saw that the days of the Confederacy

were numbered, came up with great sums of Confederate money. This they were anxious to dispose of for sight drafts on Northern banking institutions, at the rate of two dollars for one in greenbacks, and six dollars for one in gold. Outside the rate of exchange was fifteen dollars for one in greenbacks and fifty dollars for one in gold. Our necessities made us eager to accept even a shave of this kind, for it as gave us new lease on life; and while few or none of us had any money on deposit anywhere, we yet remembered the names of banking corporations to draw on, which answered every purpose. Means were thus supplied to purchase articles of diet at the sutler's, without which many must soon have succumbed. Sweet-potatoes could be had for \$35 per bushel in Confederate money; beef, \$4 per pound; pork or bacon, \$7 per pound; eggs, \$10 per dozen; soda, \$15 per pound; salt, \$2 per pound; pepper, \$35 per pound; wheat bread, \$1.50 per loaf; chickens, \$10 each; pumpkins, \$6; shoes, \$100 per pair.

In three or four weeks after our introduction to Camp Sorghum, they gave us eight axes and ten shovels, with which 1,500 men were to construct themselves quarters. To this end one hundred at a time were permitted to go out into the woods, under guard and under parole, to fell trees. Those who had any Confederate money clubbed together and bought axes at an expense of \$50 each. The axes were put into the hands of expert woodmen, who did



the cutting, whilst the others did the carrying and clearing away. The trees, after being felled, were cut into lengths of eight feet and split. The hovels, or "dug-outs," were generally made

about eight feet square upon the outside, though upon the inside, taking into account the "lap" of the logs at the ends, they were about six feet; for the accommodation of five or six persons. When we disposed ourselves to

sleep, with the bare ground for a floor, we had to lie upon our sides, packed in like sardines in a box, and no one could turn over unless the whole party did likewise. In the construction, the ground was first excavated two or three feet deep over a surface about six feet square, then split logs were piled up two or three feet higher, flush with the sides of the excavation, and the removed dirt piled up outside against the logs. One side was filled in with a chimney built of bowlders gathered from a ravine, of clay and small sticks. The object of the excavation and banking up was to make the most of the building material, to increase the warmth, and to afford protection against the artillery in case its fire should be opened upon the camp, as sometimes threatened. Besides, too, for the security of our lives, it was important to be well fortified against the bullets which passed very freely through the camp on dark nights when prisoners would run the guard line. One side of the structure was finished to a gable, and the opposite gable was formed by the chimney. A ridge pole connected the gables at the height of about seven feet from the floor. The roof of the structure, generally, was formed of a motley patchwork of blankets, meal bags, canvas, ponchos, thatch, and mud, or whatever we could secure that could be adapted to the purpose. A little hole, about two feet square, was left for a door, which was closed by a fabric of some kind to keep out the weather. Some of the hovels were entirely subterranean, except the roof, and occasionally persons moving about the camp on dark nights fell through these gauzy coverings to their own great consternation and that of the inmates, which latter usually fared the worst from such unceremonious intrusions. Not a few of the dwellings were made of poles set upright, inclined together at the top, and thatched with pine boughs and mud. Some, too, were constructed entirely of mud. In dry weather the thatched and mud huts excluded frosts and chilling winds, but during rains they always leaked badly, and poured over the inmates streams of dirty water. There were three or four quite comfortable cabins, about sixteen



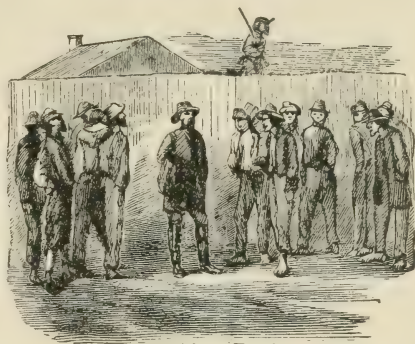
feet square, floored and roofed with clapboards, which had been built by officers from the lumber regions who had procured axes of their own. No order was observed in the location of the habitations. They were placed so closely and irregularly that the only approach to a passage way through the camp was an old road which through years of travel and washings had been worn somewhat below the surface of the surrounding ground. Even this narrow avenue had been obstructed in places by huts, so that it was a matter of great difficulty to find the way through the encampment at night.

During the first of our stay we suffered greatly for water, because only a few were allowed to go out at a time, under guard to the brook. Afterward the guard line was extended across the water-course in the day time, and we took good care to have a supply on hand at night. Common decency was outraged in the arrangements for the disposition of our excrement. A space about one hundred feet square, adjacent to the most thickly crowded portion of the camp, was set apart as a place of deposit, no sinks being dug. This was surrounded by a guard, and the number permitted to go out at a time was limited. Consequently there was always a long line awaiting their turns, and as diarrheal disorders were rife, the distress may be imagined. We scratched over dirt after the custom of animals, but the rapidly increasing accumulations of 1,400 men made an oozing, reeking mass, which sickened even the stolid guards. It was horrible to be obliged to visit the place in the day time, and at night the unfortunate who had to go in there came out in the most revolting plight. It was only when the spot became too noisome for the Confederates themselves that sinks were dug at the lower end of the camp.

While here some "hundred days" officers, captured by Early in his invasion of Maryland, were brought in. They were met at the sally-post, as were all new arrivals, with shouts of "fresh fish;" "don't rob them;" "don't eat them;" "keep your hands off;" "don't club them;" "keep your lice off," etc. Some one asked to what com-



mand they belonged, and when answered "To the hundred days troops," responded, "Well, you are in now for one hundred years, at least." As they gazed about upon the ragged, barefooted, dirty, unkempt, cadaveric, and howling crowd of miseries, their countenances betokened that the words had sunken deep into their hearts.



OF "FRESH FISH" AT MACON.

The escapes from the prisons of Richmond, Macon, Savannah, and Charleston were extremely few, so closely were we guarded. In moving from place to place on the railroad, a great many escapes were made by sawing holes in the bottom of the cars, slipping through and making off when a halt was made at night. Many, too, would boldly jump off of the train in motion in broad daylight and run for it. So great was the distance to our lines that only the few succeeded in getting through. The majority were returned at periods varying from a few days to a month. At Columbia, escapes were made by the wholesale, one hundred at a time. It was the custom to let a hundred in one party, under parole, go out into the woods after wood. While this squad was out another hundred would form in line at the dead line awaiting their turn. These would often be allowed to pass out before the others had returned. Then a hundred, who had given no parole, would form in line, and confusing the guard in regard to the squads that had passed in and out, they would also be allowed to move out. When the woods were reached, they secreted themselves in depressions which they had covered over with brush, and when night came they struck out for freedom. Parties also, who had gone out on parole as they came back with wood, called the attention of the guard to some


peculiarity of their persons or clothing so that he could identify them, saying that they would immediately pass out again and did not wish to lose time by being stopped. They would then go in, take up their paroles from the officer, pass the guard again, and so escape. Guards were also bribed and their beats run on dark nights. Several prisoners were shot at Columbia while running the guard line. Most of the prisoners were so poorly shod and clothed and so weak that they had no hope of escape when they did get out. Nevertheless, they improved every opportunity to obtain a breath of free air, even though it might be but for an hour and at great personal hazard. Blood-hounds were made use of to trace prisoners. Lieutenant Edward A. Parker, of the 1st Vermont Heavy Artillery, died at Columbia from injuries inflicted by these savage beasts, and recaptured prisoners were brought back to the same place, whose flesh had been lacerated by the teeth of these brutes. About daylight one morning two blood-hounds, lashed together, were brained with axes inside of our camp, whence they had been placed in order to get the scent. Captain James T. Morgan, of the 17th Michigan Infantry, had a shoe with a good sole upon his right foot, and the writer was equally blessed as regarded his left pedal extremity. It was proposed that cuts should be drawn to determine which should have both shoes, in order that one might be properly equipped for escape. Captain Morgan was the lucky man, and the next day he made his escape. He floated down the Santee river by night in skiffs, upon boards, logs, rails, or any piece of wood he could secure for a float. By day he lay concealed in thickets. His privations were very great, but he finally succeeded in reaching the United States gunboat stationed off the mouth of that



stream. In Captain Morgan were combined rare graces of mind and person. He had but just passed the age of manhood, and looked forward to the life before him with highest hope. Unfortunately, he did not long survive his escape. The cause of his death is not known, but it was probably from disease contracted in prison.

## CHAPTER XI.

MURDER OF PRISONERS—OFFERS OF WORK—THE TEST OF PRISON LIFE—CAPTAIN DYGERT—GENERAL STONEMAN—RELIEF FOR THE MIND—SOURCES OF COMFORT.

 SEVERAL prisoners were shot down in cold blood at Macon and Columbia, simply because some of the guards wanted to kill a "Yankee." On the 12th of June, 1864, at Macon, Lieutenant Otto Grierson, of the 45th New York Infantry, while at the spring getting water, in the night, was fired upon by the guard and killed. The guard claimed that the lieutenant was endeavoring to escape; but several prisoners who were near him asserted emphatically that he was at least sixteen feet from the "dead line," and was at the spring solely for the purpose of procuring water. It was only a few weeks before this that a guard, a boy scarcely large enough to handle a musket, fired upon Lieutenant H. P. Barker, of the 1st Rhode Island Cavalry. In answer to the lieutenant's query as to what he was shooting at, the youthful miscreant responded that he was shooting at him for putting his hand on the dead line. Another guard in the vicinity went up to the boy, gave him a good shaking, called him a young scoundrel, and said that he (the boy) knew that the officer was not anywhere near the dead line. At Columbia, the writer was quartered upon the east side of the camp, near the "dead line." When we were possessed of any wood, we usually built a little fire on the cool evenings, about fifty feet from the guard and in full view, and sat around it. On the evening of the 20th of October, as we were enjoying ourselves as well as we could, a shot was fired, which struck Lieutenant Young, of the 4th Pennsylvania Cavalry, one of the

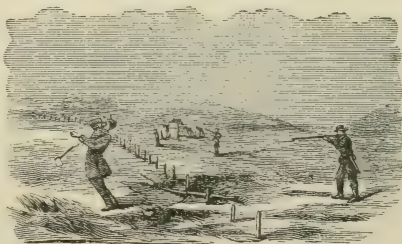


writer's messmates, who immediately fell over in the death agony, shot through the heart. We were sitting



alongside, upon the side of the fire opposite to the guard, and in its full light. The guard claimed that his gun had been discharged accidentally, whilst he was replacing a cap. It, however, seems rather singular that the man who afforded

the most conspicuous mark at the only fire along that line should have been stricken to the heart by an accidental shot. Also at Columbia, in the forenoon of the 1st of December, Lieutenant Turbane, of the 66th New York Infantry, who was paroled to go out for wood, took an ax and proceeded across the "dead line" toward the woods. He was halted by the guard and ordered back, which order he promptly obeyed. The guard waited until he had recrossed the "dead line" and passed into camp, when he drew up his musket and shot the officer in the back, killing him instantly. This murder was committed by a man bearing the name of Williams, of Williams's Battalion of South Carolina Reserves. We rose



up as one man in condemnation of this act, and demanded of the commandant the punishment of the murderer, coupled with the intimation that it would not be safe for him within the precincts of the camp. The only answer returned was the sending in of this man the next morning with a strong guard to drive us out to roll-call. At the same time, the guards were under arms and the artillery manned. It was evidently the intention, by such a procedure, to provoke an attack upon the murderer, and thus precipitate a general massacre of the prisoners. When

the escapes had become so numerous and frequent as to attract attention, the system of paroling for wood supply was stopped, and, as a substitute, a wood guard of about eighty men were thrown around the woods for two hours each day, and all in the camp were permitted to go out for wood. One day, Lieutenant T. K. Eckings, of the 3d New Jersey Infantry, learned from one of these wood guards where he would be stationed for camp guard at night. For a certain sum in Confederate money, he agreed to let the officer pass over his beat that night and escape. The money was paid to him, and signals were arranged between them, so that there might be no mistake on the part of either. The guard went in and reported the arrangement to head-quarters. Instead of giving the guard instructions to warn off the prisoner, they changed his beat, communicated the signals to the guard substituted for him, told him to answer the signals, and, when the officer came up to cross the beat, to shoot him. The guard carried out his orders to the letter. He answered the hail of the lieutenant, and shot him dead as he went up toward him. The rebel prison officials were greatly elated over this murderous deed. They seemed to think that, in thus entrapping a prisoner to his death, they had done a highly virtuous act, demonstrated the incorruptibility of the guards, and deterred the prisoners from any further assaults upon their cupidity. It was only another instance of their duplicity, and showed that it was not prudent to make payment in advance for any service engaged. In none of the cases above mentioned, was any investigation made or a guard punished. On the contrary, it was told us by the guards themselves that such deeds were rewarded by promotion or furlough.

Though the "Yankee" was much despised, he was yet held in great esteem, because of his capacity as a worker. Various offers of work outside were made to us. At Columbia, inducements of good wages, plenty of food and clothing, and the freedom of the place, were tendered to any who would engage to work in a Confederate arms factory. We were as nearly starved at Columbia as at

any place, yet no one was found who would accept such employment. The history of the "Five Hundred" evidences that some declined, not because they were restrained by any principle, but rather on account of a wholesome fear they entertained of "Uncle Sam." If any had gone out to such duty, it would, as a matter of course, have been known. The penalty, in all probability, would have been dismissal from the service, with forfeiture of all pay and allowance, and a refusal to exchange them. They might be recreant to the "Five Hundred" for considerations of personal advantage, since there might be lacking positive proof of their delinquency, and, besides, they were placed out of the reach of harm. But they could not go out to work for the Confederacy without certain knowledge of it reaching the government, and vengeance was sure to fall upon them. This also shows what little weight attaches to an oath. Where honor and truth are not inbred, no form of oath, however much it may be hedged about by oak and iron plates, will keep a man from violating it, especially where it seems to conflict with his interests to observe it.

The privations of prison life try the metal of an individual as nothing else can. They bring out in bold relief all the littleness and meanness of human nature. The great majority of those who, subject to the ordinary conditions of earthly existence, are properly considered as high-minded, honorable persons, prove wanting in the balance under the burden of this test. But, while the majority of men retrograde, gravitate, in states of extreme deprivation, toward the purely animal type, there are many who uphold the idea of a divine special creation in the most exalted probity of conduct and dignity of bearing under any and all trials. Among these was Captain Kin. S. Dygert, commanding a company of sharpshooters attached to the Sixteenth Michigan Infantry. The writer knows nothing of his civil history, or his family or relatives, or whether he be living or dead—likely dead, as nineteen years have played sad havoc with ex-prisoners of war, the



greater number having passed over to the "silent majority." He bore his part in all the battles of the Peninsula, the second Bull Run, Fredericksburg, Antietam, and Chancellorsville. He was engaged with his command in that terrible hand-to-hand struggle for the possession of Little Round Top at Gettysburg, which position they won, turning the tide of battle, and saving the day for the Union cause. Wherever bloody work was done in the Army of the Potomac—and no where was more of it done—there was the Sixteenth Michigan, with its company of sharpshooters. On the third day at Gettysburg—the 3d of July, 1863—in one of the desperate charges of the enemy to retrieve their fortunes, Captain Dygert was borne back in the receding mass of gray coats a prisoner of war. At Columbia he received, in some way, from a Michigan state agent, a small amount of Confederate money, with instructions to distribute it to the most needy Michigan officers there. The captain himself was as needy as any. He was an old prisoner, ravaged by scurvy, and nearly naked. He might have kept all the money, as some others would have done, and applied it to the relief of his own necessities. Yet, it was said, that, in ministering to his suffering companions, he entirely overlooked his own wants, and *kept nothing for himself*. Surely such a man is but "little lower than the angels." It is not known whether he had any religious creed; presumably, he could swear quite equal to an old English buccaneer, if occasion arose for it, but if there is no heaven for him, then even the wholly righteous may well be troubled with doubts. To the credit of American manhood in particular, and that of the race in general, Captain Dygert's was by no means an isolated instance of self-abnegation. There were many who made sacrifices for others whose good deeds and examples were as green spots in a desert. One of those who by example proclaimed himself a genuine man was Major-General George H. Stoneman. He was captured near Macon, Georgia, and imprisoned in the work-house at Charleston, S. C. To an offer of parole,




with good quarters and privileges, he returned a refusal, saying that he held it to be his duty to use every means in his power to escape, and it would therefore be criminal in him voluntarily to place fetters upon his limbs.

Our minds were relieved from the contemplation of our condition, by constant rumors of an exchange of prisoners, and by a consideration of events transpiring in the outside world. Our knowledge of outside matters was derived from Confederate newspapers smuggled in by guards, from direct communication with guards and negroes, and from new prisoners brought in from time to time. The rebel newspapers displayed a marvelous ingenuity in substituting fiction for truth. According to them, all engagements of the contending armies resulted in the most signal successes for the Confederates. One of the papers, figuring up Sherman's losses in the campaign to Atlanta, gave a sum total of seven hundred and fifty thousand "Yankee vandals" and "Dutch mercenaries" slain by southern valor. Calculating previous losses, and reviewing the population of the North and Germany, it was concluded that the supply was about exhausted, and that the struggle must soon terminate in favor of the South. Nevertheless, we found a great deal of satisfaction from their perusal, because we always assumed that while their war news was founded upon a basis of fact, in order to arrive at the true understanding, it was necessary to give it a directly opposite interpretation from what its reading indicated. Not a few of the guards were genuine Union men who had gone into the Confederate army to escape a worse fate. Not only at the extreme South, but also at the front at the time of capture, Union men were discovered in the Confederate uniform. Such men did every thing they could for us without bringing suspicion upon themselves. They often brought us the most encouraging reports, and they were generally reliable. Much was also obtained from the negroes, when unobserved intercourse could be had with them. They were all true to the Union, but their general knowledge being limited, only intelligence of local

affairs could be gained from them. The new arrivals brought us up in the history of the times to the date of their own capture, which latter mishap constituted, of course, the crowning event of the narrative.

## CHAPTER XII.

PRISONERS IN COLUMBIA JAIL—A LOYAL LADY—BUILDING A BRIDGE—ONE TOO MANY—MISREPRESENTATIONS—ENDEAVORS TO INFLAME PRISONERS AGAINST THEIR GOVERNMENT—THE FOOD QUESTION—RETALIATION—THE FACTS IN REFERENCE TO EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS—BALLOTING FOR PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.

 BESIDES the prisoners at Camp Sorghum there were Union officers confined in the Columbia jail. Among these was Captain R. G. Richards, of the 49th Pennsylvania infantry, now lieutenant-governor of Ohio, who has kindly furnished the following interesting sketch of his confinement:

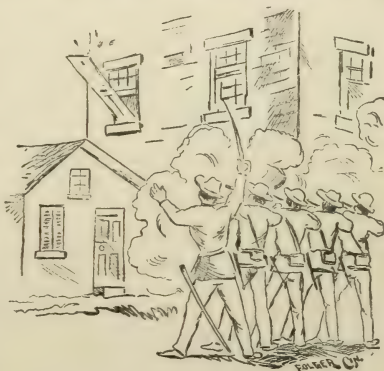
“ From July until December of 1864, about one hundred and fifty Union prisoners were confined in the Richland county jail, Columbia, S. C., two-thirds of which number were packed in the cells of the second story. The treatment received by the prisoners was similar to that at Libby, Macon, and other places, under the charge of that heartless wretch and prison fiend, General Winder. Such treatment would, if it had been possible, have starved out all hope and patriotism. But the indomitable will and unflagging determination to outlive the Confederacy, kept the prisoners hopeful and in comparatively good cheer, notwithstanding the privations and hardships to which they were exposed. It is worthy of remark, how our spirits were exalted by the perusal of a newspaper. In spite of the vigilance of the guards, we were often supplied with newspapers, from which we could glean an idea of the progress of our armies, and especially of ‘ Sherman’s march to the sea,’ which the southern press characterized as the retreat of Sherman before the superior skill and prowess of the southern generals. Good

news would always make us happy and buoyant, which feeling we manifested by singing the 'Star Spangled Banner,' 'Hail Columbia,' and other national airs. This always roused the ire of Captain Senn (the commandant of the post) and his rebel cohorts. Every day orders were given peremptorily to 'stop that air singin,' but every little while our vocal organs would become unmanageable and the music would break out afresh with renewed vigor. There were hearts in Columbia, outside of those prison walls, which throbbed to the music of the Union. On the opposite side of the street to the jail was a little, one-story cottage, 'neat and clean,' through the window of which we could see a young lady waving a white handkerchief, manifesting that 'those were her sentiments, too,' and that she would gladly, if she could, join in the chorus. God bless her, wherever she may be.

"The thought uppermost in the minds of the prisoners was to devise ways and means of escape, and their ingenuity and engineering skill were always exercised in that direction. In a short time after we were incarcerated in that filthy den, two of our number were enabled to escape, one very dark night, by being let down out of the front window onto the sidewalk below, and within ten feet of a guard, who stood in the recess of the main entrance. One (Lieutenant Williams) arrived safely within our lines near Beaufort, S. C. The fate of the other is unknown. They were let down by a sort of wooden rope, made by tying together strips of wood. Not long after that, we turned our attention to bridge building as a means of escape. A small house stood within about twelve feet of Columbia jail, separated by an alley or passage way. The comb of the roof was about on a level with the window sill of the second story of the jail. By getting upon that roof, it would be possible to slide down into the back yard out of sight of the guards; and this was only to be accomplished by bridging the chasm. Accordingly, one dark and rainy night, when all was very quiet outside, we constructed a bridge out of two long strips of wood and the boards which made our bunks. The structure, al-



though very shaky, was strong enough to bear the weight of one man at a time. All was made ready, and slowly and silently we shoved out the bridge until the outer end rested upon the roof of the small house. One prisoner was crawling out upon the structure to cross over, when the moon betrayed us by looking through a rift in the clouds just at the time the guard relief was coming on. The appearance of the celestial luminary and the discovery of the bridge by the guard were simultaneous. Immediately, without unnecessary noise, the whole guarding force was drawn up in line within sure range of the bridge, where they stood, cocked and primed, ready to riddle the first Yankee head that should make its appearance. They were seemingly unaware of the fact that we too had made a discovery. Quietly and slowly the bridge was drawn in, so that they could not see it move, until it was brought in far enough to balance it, when the external end was elevated and it was brought in on the run. As the end of the bridge went up into the air, a volley of musketry from the guards followed it; and next, their fire was turned against the window, which was shattered into fragments.



While this was going on, we shouted and cheered, protected by the brick wall. It was evident that consternation and dismay had taken possession of the gallant (!) band below. In about half an hour, the door of our prison opened, and in came Captain Senn at the head of an armed squad, with bayonets fixed, upon a tour of investigation. By this time, however, we were all, of course! fast asleep, some snoring lustily. Finally, after an application of the commandant's boot to the sleeping forms of those he first encountered, all woke up with much surprise, and asked, 'What on earth is the matter?' 'Matter enough,' was the reply. 'Whar's that

air bridge?" "What bridge? What do we know about a bridge?" The bridge had been taken apart as soon as drawn in, and each one had his piece of board fitted in his bunk. After many questions, with answers that did not suit, we were drawn up in two ranks to be counted. Some one in the rear rank managed to make his appearance in two places, and was counted twice. This was too much for the even (!) temper of Captain Senn. "What does this mean?" he yelled at the top of his voice. "Whar did that air extra man come from?" One of the prisoners then announced to him, by way of explanation, that it was a fact that an outsider had got in. A man, he said, had climbed onto the roof of the small building with a ladder, and asked to be taken in. He had heard so much of the luxuries and comforts of Columbia jail that he desired admittance. Accordingly, he had thrown his ladder across the alley to the jail window, and they had pulled him in, and that was all there was of it. The captain with his guard at once abandoned the investigation; but, by the way they snarled and growled as they moved away, it was evident that they did not consider themselves wiser, however much they might be madder, men."

The Confederates endeavored to imbue us with the idea that our government was responsible for the cessation of the exchange of prisoners, and therefore for the condition of the Union prisoners of war in the South, since the Confederacy did not possess the provisions to subsist them. This was reiterated to us over and over again by officers and citizens who visited us. At Macon Catholic priests came in who gave us vivid accounts of the sufferings and privations of our enlisted men at Andersonville and other places, and urged us to take some action looking to their relief. We were at a loss what to do, since we were not so vastly better off, but we were relieved from our dilemma by our considerate prison commandant in the timely suggestion that we should send a request to the Confederate secretary of war to permit a delegation of our number to visit Andersonville and afterward report

to our government. But it was stipulated, in advance of investigation, that the petition should contain an acknowledgment that the Confederacy was in nowise responsible for their horrible condition. This proposition was very promptly declined, although perhaps a few individuals did append their names to such a paper, from which nothing was ever heard. We were willing to stay there and rot before we would become *particeps criminis* in any such outrageous proceeding. Still, such misrepresentations were not without their effect. Sometimes very bitter talk was heard from prisoners respecting the attitude of our government, and Secretary Stanton in particular was unsparingly denounced. Rumors of a formidable organization at Andersonville, sworn to assassinate him, were rife, together with the existence of a body of prisoners in our own camp similarly pledged against the great war secretary. The plea that they had no food with which to supply their prisoners was a poor one. Whenever we had any money to buy food of a sutler, in whose gains the prison authorities shared, there was no lack of it. They had no scarcity of corn meal, bacon, beef, sweet potatoes, beans, onions, pumpkins, salt and soda, and these were all we needed. Their Confederate money would buy these articles, and it was of no use for any thing else, since it had no value outside of the Confederacy. Surely they could not plead a poverty of this currency when they had at Columbia scores of printing presses turning it out by the millions daily, and hundreds of young women engaged solely in attaching the signatures of the treasury officials. In marked contrast was the action of the United States government toward the prisoners in its keeping. Those prisoners who, after exchange, appeared before the members of the U. S. Senate Committee on Prisoners of War, thought they knew just what was best to be done to secure good treatment for our captive soldiers in the South. When asked what in their opinion would most contribute to their relief, the ready answer was, "Retaliation in kind." But the chairman, bluff Senator Ben



Wade, speaking for the committee, truly said that no government could stand the odium of such an act; that it would become accursed of God and man, and would perish from the earth.

We had a very good knowledge of the facts bearing upon exchange, which were as follows: In December, 1863, the United States government proposed to exchange man for man and officer for officer. This was agreed to as regards white troops, but the Confederate government refused to recognize captured negro troops and officers as prisoners of war subject to exchange. This acted as a bar until the 10th of August, 1864, when the Confederates accepted the Union terms. Hereupon commenced a slow exchange, mostly of sick and wounded. The United States government, however, would not at that time enter upon a general exchange, for the following valid reasons: General Sherman was then in the heart of Georgia, moving in the direction of the rebel prisons, with a good prospect of liberating the bulk of the Union prisoners. The Union prisoners held in the South were all unfit for service from starvation and exposure, while the Confederate prisoners in the North were able-bodied and in prime condition to take the field. An exchange under such circumstances would furnish to the Confederates gratuitously a splendid army of fighting men. To do so at such a critical period of the war would be to prolong the struggle at an inestimable sacrifice of blood and treasure, and to put in greater jeopardy the life of the nation. Under date of August 14, 1864, General Grant telegraphed General Butler, the United States commissioner for exchange: "It is hard on our men held in southern prisons not to exchange them, but it is humane to those left in the ranks to fight our battles. If we now commence a system of exchange which liberates all prisoners taken, we shall have to fight on until the whole South is exterminated. If we hold those captured, they count for more than dead men." Accordingly General Butler, under instructions from the War Department, notified Judge Ould, the Confederate



exchange commissioner, that all negotiations having reference to a general exchange were indefinitely suspended.

Notwithstanding the desperate straits to which they were reduced, and the agencies and influences employed to ensnare them, the true soldiers of the Union repelled with indignation all reflections upon the attitude of their government in respect to the cartel. As long as they could best serve the interests of their government in those loathsome prison hells, they could suffer and die without a murmur. The only complaints they uttered were that their government provided bountifully for the Confederate prisoners of war in its keeping, and thereby was in a measure responsible for the cruelties of the Confederate prison authorities. From their point of view, retaliatory measures were absolutely essential to induce a more tolerable treatment for themselves. Therefore when retaliatory procedures were not put in operation it seemed to be giving license to the rebel officials to go to any lengths they chose in their savagery.

It was decided to take a ballot for the presidential candidates, Lincoln and McClellan, on the 17th of October, 1864. The rebel officials seemed to be greatly interested in this election. They told us that they would publish the result in the Columbia newspapers. At the same time they commented upon the cessation of exchange, which they represented as wholly due to the determination of "the Lincoln government to make a nigger better'n a white man." Great sympathy was expressed for us, the old story of having done every thing possible for us was reiterated, and lavish promises as to future comforts and supplies were uttered. Notwithstanding their contrary wishes, Mr. Lincoln received 1,024 votes against 143 for McClellan, the total votes numbering 1,167 out of 1,382 reported as present in camp. About the same time, elections held by the Union prisoners at Florence, S. C., and at Millen, Ga., showed a decided preference for Mr. Lincoln. The results of these ballotings never appeared in the southern papers, since such intelligence was en-

tirely the reverse of what they would have wished to disseminate. The two hundred officers who failed to vote were probably those who would not vote for McClellan, and yet declined to indorse Lincoln's administration by reason of dissatisfaction concerning exchange.

## CHAPTER XIII.

SYMPATHY OF SOUTHERN PEOPLE AND TROOPS FOR PRISONERS—ABIDING GUESTS—GRAY BACKS, TRAVELERS—CLOTHING—REPAIRS AND WASHING—COOKING AND COOKING UTENSILS—DISEASES—HOMESICKNESS—SANITARY REGULATIONS—DISTRIBUTION OF RATIONS—DIVERSIONS—MUSIC—“SHERMAN’S MARCH TO THE SEA.”



LARGE portion of the Southern people had no knowledge of the cruelties and privations to which Union prisoners were subjected. Every-where we went it was patent that the citizens outside were ready and anxious to afford us relief if it had been permitted by the authorities. From escaped prisoners many statements have been received that pronounced secessionists, by whom they were recaptured, were very commiserate when they noticed their condition and heard the stories of their treatment. In not a few instances they again released them and gave them means to help them on their way. These facts have been derived from the personal narratives of recaptured prisoners with whom we have conversed, and they are verified by the published accounts of other escaped prisoners. Even the Texas Rangers, who recaptured some of the escaped prisoners, were moved to pity for them and treated them with great consideration. At Savannah, where we fared better than at any other place in the Confederacy, we were guarded by the 1st Georgia Regiment of infantry, the members of which had been prisoners of war in the hands of the United States forces. They had been well cared for as prisoners, and we were furnished with a good living ration as long as they had us in charge. They addressed us as “gentlemen.” It was a military necessity which had placed us in Savannah, and

the sentiment of the community and of the guarding force being decidedly against inhuman measures toward prisoners, the higher powers hardly dared to run counter to it. At Charleston, also, the last place where it would be supposed that Union soldiers would find aid, we were not without assurances that, but for the rebel authorities, our condition would have been much ameliorated through the good offices of the citizens. Near Raleigh, N. C., where an exchange of prisoners was made, Captain H. P. Cooke, A. A. G., now of Cincinnati, was told by a Union officer, who witnessed it, that the well fed and clothed returned Confederates were surprised and shocked at the appearance and destitution of our men who had been prisoners in the South. They divested themselves of the good clothes issued to them by our government, and, as they handed them over to our nearly naked soldiers, said, "We have no right to these things; they belong to you." A Confederate officer, who was an exchanged prisoner, in a conversation with Major George B. Fox, of the 75th Ohio Infantry, remarked: "If I had been the Confederate Commissioner of Exchange, my regard for the reputation of the people of the South would never have permitted me to turn over such physical wrecks as your men are who have been in southern prisons, to proclaim to the world the infamous barbarity of the Confederate government." The infernal policy toward Union prisoners had been deliberately devised by the Confederate executive and the war office in order to tax as much as possible the resources of the North and spare their own. It was in order to return to the northern people a lot of physical wrecks to be a burden upon them, while the South received in exchange sound, able-bodied men, in prime condition to take the field and relieve worn-out troops. The excuse that their own army was upon short rations only applied after Sherman had bisected the Confederacy and destroyed lines of railroad communication and rolling stock. It did not apply before.

Guests whom we had always with us demanded a portion of each day's time. These belonged to the ancient



and celebrated family, *Pediculi corporis*. There were two varieties—the gray backs proper, and the travelers. The gray backs need no description, they are familiar to all earnest students of natural history. The travelers were perhaps overgrown gray backs; possibly they were the highest development of their species in the line of the doctrine of the survival of the fittest. That they possessed a cerebral organization capable of thought seems probable, for the cool effrontery they exhibited in tormenting their hosts, could hardly have been the result of simple instinct. They were about three-sixteenths of an inch in length, had a small head and a pear-shaped body, flattened upon the upper and under surfaces. The central line of the back was marked by a longitudinal dark gray stripe, with a similar shorter stripe upon each side. The color of the cuticle was a dirty silver gray, and it was so tough that only the artful masher could break it without difficulty. It was principally at night that the traveler devoted himself to the entertainment of those with whom he might be sojourning. The spinal column was his favorite seat. Up and down this he would wander, like a donkey in a thistle-patch, cropping a morsel here and a mouthful there. When, by this means, he had dispelled sleep, and aroused attention to his presence, he would commence a lively promenade, moving obliquely across the backbone, from one side to the other. His victim would pound upon his back with his closed fists in the hope that he might make a lucky hit and smash his tormenter. Vain hope! The traveler had anticipated this, and when the blow fell it always found him sheltered under a projecting bony prominence, to commence again his excursion when the tempest had subsided. There was no way for it but to let this evil genius exercise his own sweet will until morning, and then—retribution! In the morning the hunt was on. Every article of clothing was carefully peeled off, and its



inmost recesses thoroughly examined. If the individual was fortunate enough to possess a shirt, this garment was taken off last, and with extraordinary care, so as not to disturb the traveler. His haunts were beaten with extreme caution, for the traveler was an artful dodger, and it required a quick hand to catch him. But when caught there was no dialogue with the traveler concerning the night. There was simply a quick movement of two thumbs, and the wreck of matter was the only sign of promise remaining of what might have been before. The greatest accumulation of vermin encountered was upon our flag-of-truce boat employed in the exchange of prisoners in Charleston harbor. We were transferred to it about sundown on the 10th of December, 1864, and, being exhausted, we lost no time in getting into the cots provided. It took but a few minutes to discover that the cots were occupied by a living, moving mass of *pediculi* capable of flaying a man alive in a short time. We shook the bedding and our clothing over the boat's side into the bay, and it is no exaggeration to say that the surface of the water was so covered by them for a considerable space around the vessel that it assumed a gray color, the "ocean blue" being entirely obscured.

Having but one suit of clothes, it was worn day and night, except during the daily morning hunt. But few were provided with needles or thread or the means to procure them. When repairs were necessary they were made by means of wooden needles, with strands from bagging for thread. Wooden pins supplied the place of buttons. All sorts of material was utilized for patches, and as these additions to the raiment increased, it became difficult to determine what constituted the original fabric. Once in awhile, when a camp-kettle could be secured, the clothes were



boiled, partly to free them from dirt, but principally to effect a total destruction of vermin. During this process a blanket was girded about the waist and in this undress uniform we disported ourselves until the articles of dress were dried. When we became shirtless the only recourse was to steal a meal bag, cut a hole in the bottom for the head and neck, and holes in the sides near the bottom for the arms. The next general ration issued was short the value of a meal bag. If sleeves were desired for this neat-fitting garment, they had to be fashioned from blanket or canvas, and were fastened on in the most varied styles of art. We got along well enough without socks, but those who were without shoes were in a sorry fix, especially when we had to move. They made such shift as they could by tying up the feet in old leather, blankets, etc. Shoes were saved as much as possible by going barefoot about camp when the weather permitted. The only supply of any thing we received was at Columbia, where a box of unbleached cotton underclothing came to us from the U. S. Sanitary Commission. The most needy were thus furnished either a shirt or pair of drawers. Some of the articles seemed to have been designed simply with a view of putting the greatest quantity of material into them. They were not adapted to any shape, either human or divine. This, however, fortunately inured to our benefit, for the "slack" which could be taken out of an undershirt or pair of drawers was sufficient to make another garment or to roof a shanty.

There was not much to cook, or many dishes to wash, yet a division of labor was made, and each one took his turn. All had a knife of some description, a tin cup and tin plate, or, in lieu of these, the half of a canteen, which served both as plate and cup, and also, at times, as a frying and stew pan. Yet cooking was often a serious matter, on account of the scarcity of utensils to cook in, or of fuel to cook with. There were only two or three axes to one hundred men, and we often had to postpone our meals for hours in order to secure an ax with which to chop our wood. At Macon the issue of utensils to each



one hundred men was as follows: Five (5) Dutch ovens, with covers; fifteen (15) Dutch ovens, without covers; ten (10) one gallon and a half tin buckets; ten (10) one gallon tin pans; and five (5) wooden buckets. Having thus only one Dutch oven with a cover to twenty-five men, and using them in regular order, it was requisite for each mess to cook at one time enough corn bread to last for two or three days. To prepare mush or beans, we had to make use of the tin buckets, and, as turns had also to be observed with these things, there could be no regularity in meals. Sometimes only one meal a day could be prepared; generally we were fortunate enough to get two, but it was rare, and we were very lucky when we got three daily meals. At Savannah each one hundred received: One (1) sixteen gallon iron camp kettle; eight (8) three gallon tin pails; eleven (11) small iron skillets; sixteen one and a half gallon tin pans; four wooden buckets; two axes, and two hatchets. Here, as nearly every mess had its brick oven, and as many had brought away from Macon skillets, pans, and buckets, in violation of orders, we got along very well, and had our meals with regularity. Bacon was usually cooked in with the mush or beans. The corn bread was simply a baked mixture of corn meal, water, and salt. When baked, it was as hard as lead. By putting corn meal and water in a tin vessel in the sun, an acetous fermentation was induced, forming a sort of sponge, which, mixed with the bread, gave it lightness through the evolvment of carbonic acid during the baking. But this made the bread sour and nauseous. When we could obtain soda, the acidity could be neutralized, and a fairly light, palatable pone was the result. Always, upon leaving a prison, the order was to leave all camp equipage behind which had been issued to us. If we had obeyed this order, we should have been without any cooking apparatus at Charleston and Columbia. We, however, had a weather eye to the future. One would roll up a camp kettle in his blanket, another a Dutch oven, another a pail, etc. The individuals who bore off these implements acquired, in this way, a vested right in them, and



their disposition thereafter went by favor, and not by rule. Our mess was fortunate enough to have thus secured the right of eminent domain over a Dutch oven and camp kettle lugged all the way from Savannah. The latter end of November, we procured some Confederate money on sight drafts, and what a feast the Dutch oven enabled us to prepare! Roast beef and sweet potatoes, and oh, ye gods, meat gravy thickened with flour! We clung to these household gods by fastening them to us whilst we slept.

The principal diseases were diarrhea, dysentery, scurvy, consumption, or inanition, and at Columbia some yellow fever, with plenty of intermittent fever and rheumatism. There was no medical treatment, except at Macon, where an assistant surgeon, Dr. John Nickerson, of a Connecticut regiment, had a supply of blue mass, which he dispensed with impartial hand to the afflicted, regardless of the disease. There were hospitals outside of the camp, where they professed to give attention to the sick, but no one went out to them until he felt ready to die. It was the common impression that death was the lot of all who went into the hospital. Home sickness was a very prevalent disease, and it often proved fatal. Men talked incessantly about their homes, vainly waiting and watching for intelligence. They lost appetite, began to pine, become feverish, and if they were not succored by vigorous treatment, were finally taken out to the hospital, almost certainly to die. The active treatment was administered by the sufferer's messmates, and consisted of measures calculated to arouse his ire and thirst for vengeance. A council would be held over the patient, the conclusion reached that he was a doomed man, and that, as he was about to be removed to the hospital, where he was likely to yield up the ghost very soon, and as his bodily effects would there be seized upon by strangers, whereas it was only in accordance with the "eternal fitness of things" that his friends should possess them—they would then and there proceed to despoil him. Such therapeutic means commonly called forth a most emphatic denunciation of what

the sufferer deemed atrocious heartlessness, and aroused within him a high resolve to live and administer upon the effects of his persecutors. This sufficed, in some instances, to cure the disease, but, where it failed, ingenuity was fertile in devising other ways equally well calculated to bring about recovery. Nevertheless, in many cases, every thing failed.

The ranking officer had the direction of all inside matters, as far as they related simply to the prisoners themselves. He saw that a good internal sanitary police was maintained; had the camp cleaned and swept, and looked to it that no accumulations of any kind were left to become possible disease factors. He appointed a chief commissary and commissaries for each hundred men, who received the rations from the authorities and made an equitable division of them. There were sub-commissaries for squads of twenty-five, who distributed the rations received from the company commissaries to the messes. Thus, every man received his full share of the rations, and his surroundings were made as salubrious as possible. In addition to this, there was a social requirement not expressed but understood, which behooved every one to observe the greatest practicable cleanliness of person and decency of habits on pain of ostracism.

Men of every avocation and profession were included among the prisoners. Instructors were found for any who wished to presecute such studies as astronomy, the various branches of the higher mathematics, logic, philosophy, physics, rhetoric, political economy, navigation, or languages, ancient or modern. The science of Hoyle, how-

ever, was the subject of most study, and there were many who had advanced a few points beyond the master himself. From constant use, the backs of the cards became as familiar as the faces. Whist, euchre, "seven-up," cribbage, and



poker were the favorite games. Not only were the games

engaged in for diversion, but there was also a small circle of gamblers who devoted all their otherwise unoccupied time to draw-poker for any thing they had to venture on the cards, even staking their clothes and rations. Chessmen were whittled out, and there were many earnest devotees of the noble game of chess. Checkers, as well, came in for a good share of attention. Fencing, with sticks for rapiers, was a daily exercise with a large number when the weather was not rainy. Leap frog was occasionally practiced; but this and fencing were about the only physical diversissements our contracted space permitted. Besides, too, our physical condition was not such as to make very active exercise desirable. For a time, great amusement was created by forming a monstrous looking insect out of pieces of twigs, ravelings, and bits of cloth. This was suspended by a thread to the end of a stick. Some one who was taking a nap was approached from behind, and the bogus insect swung back and forth so as to touch his face. It fairly convulsed the onlookers, to see the dazed appearance of affright in the bulging eyes of the sleeper as he awoke, sprung into a sitting posture, and aimed frantic blows at the fraud. The old prisoners were soon up to the trick, and were not disturbed by it, but it never failed in its effect upon a new comer. Once in a while, the tedium of the camp was relieved by a fight. It was rare, though, that we were disgraced in this way by an ebullition of passion.

Music contributed not a little to please the soul and obliterate environment. A glee club of splendid voices was made up of Major J. H. Isett, of the 8th Indiana Cavalry; Captain F. A. Patterson, 3d West Virginia Cavalry; Captain E. S. Daniels, 35th U. S. C. T., and one other officer whose name is lost. At Charleston, a string band was organized, and the money for the instruments—\$800 in Confederate currency—was obtained by a collection taken up among the prisoners. Lieutenant G. W. Chandler, 1st West Virginia Cavalry, had the first violin; Lieutenant J. S. Manning, 116th Ohio Infantry, the second violin; Lieutenant J. O. Rockwell, 97th New York Infantry, the flute,

and Major J. E. Pratt, 4th Vermont Infantry, coaxed out the melodies from the base viol. The music furnished was not only a delight to the prisoners, but also to the guards; and it seemed to be the only spell capable of touching the great majority of the latter. It was in prison at Columbia, that the famous song "Sherman's March to the Sea" was composed by Adjutant S. H. M. Byers, 5th Iowa Infantry. It was set to music by Lieutenant Rockwell, of the band, and the reception it met with the first time it was ever heard, as sung by the glee club to the prisoners at Columbia, was such as must have caused the author of the song, who witnessed it, to fear that he had produced a piece destined to destroy the vocal organs and the reason of the patriotic American portion of the human family. The prisoners could not get enough of it. The glee club repeated it again and again, until the members were voiceless. Men capered about like maniacs, cheering for Sherman until exhausted. All through the night and day, the chorus would break out, spread from mouth to mouth, and continue until checked by a threat of extermination from the prison commandant.

#### SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA.

Our camp fires shone bright on the mountains  
That frowned on the river below,  
While we stood by our guns in the morning,  
And eagerly watched for the foe,  
When a rider came out from the darkness  
That hung over mountain and tree,  
And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready;  
For Sherman will march to the sea."

Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman  
Went up from each valley and glen,  
And the bugles re-echoed the music  
That came from the lips of the men;  
For we knew that the stars on our banner  
More bright in their splendor would be,  
And that blessings from Northland would greet us  
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

Then forward, boys, forward to battle  
We marched on our wearisome way;



And we stormed the wild hills of Resaca—  
God bless those who fell on that day!  
Then Kenesaw, dark in its glory,  
Frowned down on the flag of the free;  
But the East and the West bore our standards,  
As Sherman marched down to the sea.

Still onward we pressed, till our banner  
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,  
And the blood of the patriot dampened  
The soil where the traitor flag falls;  
But we paused not to weep for the fallen  
Who slept by each river and tree;  
Yet we twined them a wreath of the laurel  
As Sherman marched down to the sea.

O, proud was our army that morning,  
That stood where the pine darkly towers,  
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary;  
This day fair Savannah is ours!"  
Then sang we a song for our chieftain,  
That echoed o'er river and lea,  
And the stars in our banner shone brighter  
When Sherman marched down to the sea.

## CHAPTER XIV.

ENROLLMENT OF SICK AND WOUNDED FOR EXCHANGE—DEPARTURE FROM COLUMBIA—BRANCHVILLE—A DESPERATE SOUTH CAROLINIAN—CHARLESTON—DEVASTATION AND DESOLATION—CONFEDERATE FLAG OF TRUCE BOAT—ON BOARD “GOD’S VESSEL”—ENLISTED MEN FROM ANDERSONVILLE—HORRIBLE CONDITION—FEARFUL MORTALITY ON SHIPBOARD—ADMIRAL PORTER’S FLEET—THE “OLD FLAG” SUPREME AND MEMORIAL.



ON the 8th of December, 1864, at Columbia, S. C., the Confederates came into camp, and went hunting around among the hovels to get a list of the sick and wounded. At first, they were unsuccessful, and could not find any who claimed to be sick or wounded. It was suspected that, under the pretense of medical treatment, they wished to isolate the debilitated and disabled, and make life to them even more burdensome than that which they were then enduring. No one cared to be separated from his comrades on any uncertainties, particularly on promises as unreliable as those of rebel prison officials. When, however, assurances were given that the list was being taken for purposes of exchange, and not for removal otherwise, there was no trouble about obtaining names. In fact, they no longer had to hunt up the disabled. Their names were brought in from all portions of the camp. Some comrade had the kindly interest to have the writer’s name put down as among the wounded. Every one yearned to be maimed in some way or to be sick. All felt that the only society worth belonging to was one composed exclusively of cripples, and they were anxious to be enrolled. Any body who had any sort of a scar, wound, or sore, sent in his name. In the meantime, they busied

themselves irritating old cicatrices by rubbing and jabbing with sticks so as to make a depressed and bleeding sore. Those who had a few small circular scurvy spots upon the legs reamed out the scurvy blackened tissue, claiming that the holes thus made were gunshot wounds affecting the bone and sinuses connected therewith, which had never healed. Individuals who before had good use of their limbs became suddenly very much disabled. Some hobbled along with two canes, whilst others managed with great difficulty to get about on one. All moved with becoming deliberation and an appearance of much suffering. All personal effects were inventoried and placed at the disposal of messmates. Every thing which could be of service to remaining comrades was turned over to them, and nothing was taken out but what barely sufficed to cover our bodies, and what the others had no desire to retain. In return, we received letters and messages for relatives and friends in the North. On the morning of the 9th, the list was read off at the sally-port to pass out to the surgeon's tent for examination. No one was missing, and a sad-looking procession of halt and lame moved off, amid shouts of "Good-bye" and "God bless you," to meet the searching ordeal of the surgeons. Only a few were admitted to the tent at a time. How



many were rejected, if any, is not known; but many were passed who had no disability beyond an old flesh wound which they had irritated. The deception was kept up. No one forgot his infirmity until we were safe under the sheltering folds of the stars and stripes.

The party, consisting of about two hundred, left Columbia in the afternoon. About midnight, the train stopped at Branchville for wood and water. Here was located a railroad eating-house, whose doors swung open day and night

for the refreshment of such hungry wayfarers as had money in their purses. To those who, for months, had lived almost in a state of nature, the tallow candles within this by no means luxurious place of entertainment seemed to illuminate a very paradise. The suggestions of warmth and fatness reflected by the soft mellow rays, were fraught with almost as much cheer as a glimpse of the old flag, or a sight of home. A congregation of tramps and lunch-fiends was never more moved by the vision of a free lunch establishment, nor was ever a crowd of such worthies more forlorn, unkempt, or penniless, than the body which moved as one man from the cars into that Branchville refreshment room. No guards were there to interpose restraint, for we were under the sole care of a Confederate lieutenant. The boards were spread with nothing save bread crusts and what was contained in the castors. Never did men pound upon the tables and shout "Waiter" with greater gusto or anticipation. No waiter answered to the call. The proprietor, however, a lean, long-haired, thin-



visaged man, of medium size, clad in butternut, put in an appearance, with a Colt's navy revolver in his hand. He was not simply mad, he was furious. He cursed the officer in charge, and consigned the guests to unutterable torments. Mounting a

chair and brandishing his artillery, he poured out upon us volleys of epithets and denunciations, which are "forgiven, if not forgotten." He declared, with a fearful oath, that no man should go out alive until five hundred dollars had been paid him for the unhallowed invasion of his premises, and that, if the money was not immediately forthcoming he was going to inaugurate an indiscriminate slaughter forthwith. Responses of—"Louder, old mush mouth," "Louder, old pudding head," "Kill us the fattest calf," "Bring in the best you have," "Put him in a



nose bag," "Cut his throat," "Stab him to the heart," etc., did not tend to soothe him in the least. He had got started, and knew not how to stop. His rage increased, and in the same ratio did the chaffing and disorder. In the midst of the racket, Lieutenant Roach, of the 49th New York Infantry, entered the room. He took in the situation at a glance, and, seeing a brass faucet lying by the side of a keg, seized it. Presenting the muzzle close behind the head of the irate proprietor, he ordered him to get down and out, or suffer the penalty of having his brains blown out. The gallant South Carolinian cast a hurried glance around, his eyes appeared to expand to the size of billiard balls, and he betook himself away with the greatest dispatch. After picking up such "unconsidered trifles" as cruets of vinegar and pepper, together with salt and bread crusts to serve as mementoes of the place, we again embarked on board the cars, in obedience to the orders of the officer in charge. But the adventure had imparted a degree of hilarity which could scarcely have been furnished by a genuine "square meal." No sooner were we under way, than the lieutenant instituted a search for the "pistol" which had been displayed in the dining room. Tracing it up to Lieutenant Roach, he said to that officer, "You must hand me over the pistol you have upon your person." "A pistol! I have no pistol; nor have I had one in my possession;" replied the officer. "But the the eating-house proprietor said that a pistol was drawn on him, and I have good evidence that you was the man who did it," persisted the lieutenant, "and unless you deliver up the weapon it will be decidedly the worse for you." Thereupon, Lieutenant Roach produced the faucet, remarking that he was loth to part with an article so effective as a substitute for a pistol, and yet so harmless. The officer laughed long and heartily when he saw what an innocent thing had discomfited so blood-thirsty an individual. He announced his intention of taking the faucet back to Branchville with him, to show the owner with what a terrible instrument the "blue-bellies" had put him down.

Charleston was reached the morning of the 10th.

There was some hitch in the exchange arrangements, so we were marched up into the city and turned loose in the City Hotel. We thus had an opportunity of viewing what had been the business and principal residence portion of the place. Vegetation was rank in the streets and the sidewalks were blocked with rubbish from battered buildings. The wharves were rotting away, and it required very careful stepping to avoid being precipitated into the water. Fine buildings had great gaping holes in them; many were heaps of ruins. Splendid church edifices with tall steeples were riddled through and through. The building formerly occupied by the bank of South Carolina was wrecked, the elegant white marble counters shattered and surrounded by rubbish from the ceilings and walls. The City Hotel, where we were quartered, the best hotel in the city, had been deserted, evidently in a great hurry, as the furniture and tableware had been left behind. A large ragged hole in the wall back of the office desk told the story of the exodus. It was cold and we broke up the bedsteads and chairs to make fires in the grates. We also helped ourselves liberally to plates, cups, saucers, and other articles which might prove useful in case there should be any failure to exchange. The clock yet hung on the wall, and if it was not carried off it was because it was too big to conceal or too heavy to carry. The city proper was deserted. There were not five thousand inhabitants in the whole place including negroes, dogs, and all. Those who formerly peopled it were living in cabins and box-cars strung along the lines of railroad toward Columbia and Savannah.

About one or two o'clock we were taken on board of the Confederate flag of truce vessel, a rakish looking blockade runner, with a black hull and masts sloping very much backward. The craft was nearly new and a model of marine architecture. There was a great contrast between it and our flag of truce boat, which was a sort of ferry-float. Yet the latter was regarded with much more favor by our eyes than the former. The cold sea breeze played freely through our rags and chilled us

to the bone. We huddled around the smoke-stacks, the furnaces, and cook's galley for warmth. A spirit of investigation led us into many mysterious barrels and bunkers. As there were yet misgivings respecting exchange, onions, potatoes, pieces of meat, etc., were put away for future reference between the skin and the shirt above the waist. Some seemed as though they had been reinforced around the girth by a growth of nodular tumors. It was, however, simply a laudable manifestation of thrift. Finally, late in the afternoon, anchors were weighed, the boats came together, and the transfer took place. What a time there was when we stood upon the deck of "God's vessel!" Canes and staffs were thrown to the waves, former disabilities were forgotten. We cheered the flag, hugged each other, danced, howled, and cried until exhausted. Some sought hiding-places, influenced by the dread reflection that a mistake might be developed and they would be taken back. A light supper of wheat bread and coffee was disposed of and we betook ourselves to bed.

We steamed down the harbor past frowning Moultrie and shore batteries, the crumbling walls of Sumter, the grim looking monitors, and the long range guns of Morris Island, which had wrought such desolation in Charleston. All these were silent now in honor of the prisoners of war who, a few weeks before, had lived in helpless misery listening to the sound of their thunders. Six hundred enlisted men, who had been at Andersonville and other similar prison hells were exchanged with us. Many were entirely destitute of clothing, shivering in the piercing wind from the sea; and such rags as were possessed by the others were covered with creeping masses of lice. When they shook their remnants of blankets, these vermin fell off in clouds. A large number were mere emaciated skeletons. The instances were not rare where over the prominent osseous parts, as about the hips, spine, and shoulders, the bones projected bare of tissue through scurvy destroyed skin. Not less than a dozen gaping,



grinning idiots were seen with great, vacant, lusterless eyes sunken deep in bony sockets. The skin was like black parchment from the ravages of scurvy and the accumulations of filth, while bleeding, spongy bones appeared upon the lower extremities where the flesh had rotted off. Inquiries elicited no intelligence, no response. Reason had long since fled, and beings once men only preserved an outward form resemblance through the most feeble vital spark. The wonder was that they had any life at all. The poor starved wretches crowded and jammed about the provision-room. In their eagerness to obtain food, they were regardless of the naked bayonets of the guards. They seized upon bread and meat, ate it like famished animals, and lay down and died.

The first night after exchange was spent upon the flag-of-truce boat. The next day a transfer was made to the good ship, *Northern Light*, outside the bar, which lay over one night before sailing north. During this time more than one hundred of these enlisted men died and their bodies were committed to the sea. On the way up to Annapolis over one hundred more gave up their hold on life and were tossed overboard. One hundred more died shortly after arrival at Annapolis, and of the remainder, less than three hundred, it is not probable, that as many as seventy-five were ever restored to a sound state of physical being. Calloused as we were, inured to scenes of hardship, suffering, and horror, one visit to the hold of the *Northern Light*, in which these poor victims of inhuman barbarity lay, was as much as we could endure. The smell of gangrene and foul discharges, the groans and wails of the poor sufferers, was overpowering. There is no reward in this life adequate for the ministering angels who waited on them, in the form of surgeons, hospital stewards, and nurses, in as kindly a manner as if they were princes of royal blood or crowned kings.

We passed Admiral Porter's fleet under way to the bombardment of Fort Fisher. If good wishes could aid any in the enterprise, we sent out to the armament all the reinforcement of this kind to be desired. Fort Fisher



was captured, counting one in a succession of brilliant victories, under which the sun of the Confederacy declined lower and lower, finally to set forever at Bentonville. Once more the old flag waved in supremacy over the whole country. Under the shadow of its folds the dead who cherished it rest well in southern climes. It floats there as a memorial of them, no less than of the majesty of the great Republic in emblemizes, in accordance with the last wish that many of them gasped with their expiring breath. And there it will continue to be displayed, a thing of beauty and a joy to all right-minded men, as long as patriotism and human sympathy find lodgment in the hearts of the people of the nation.

## CHAPTER XV.

CONTRAST BETWEEN THE OFFICERS AND ENLISTED MEN—CONDITION OF ENLISTED MEN AT ANDERSONVILLE—KNOWN DEATHS AMONG THE UNION OFFICERS—INACCURACY OF THE REBEL RETURNS OF DEATHS—GENERAL MORTALITY OF UNION AND CONFEDERATE OFFICERS—UNION OFFICERS KILLED BY GUARDS—INTERMENT OF UNION OFFICERS.



It is in order now briefly to allude to the differences in the physical state and appearance of the Union officers and enlisted men who were prisoners of war in the Confederacy; to present such mortality records and estimates as are available, and unquestionably applicable, to officers who were prisoners of war, both Union and Confederate, and, finally, to exhibit the manner in which the humane government of the United States treated rebel officers (as well as enlisted men), prisoners of war in its hands.

There was a marked contrast between the Union officers and enlisted men, as regards their physical condition, when brought together for exchange. In making a comparison it is proper to consider what was common to both, or operative solely upon either, and to present the men simply as they were, under the influences to which they were subject—the officers having already received consideration.

The state of the officers was wretched enough, shocking enough to call forth universal execration upon those who were accountable for it; but the plight of the men was so much more repulsive, so sickening, and terrible, as to make comparison appear strained. On the one hand were sallow, emaciated, scurvy-spotted, enfeebled men; on the other, nearly naked shapes of men which appeared to

have been resurrected after long burial and to have had the breath of life infused. Those who have not seen such creatures are not prepared to credit the statements respecting them. Exaggeration is impossible on the part of those whose sight has been afflicted by the dread realities of vision which have passed beneath flags of truce and been received on hospital ships. The difference was not brought about by a poorer ration allowance, for this, from the information obtained from the men, and from their published narratives, was about the same in kind, quantity, and quality as the officers received, with the exception of the generous ration supplied to those who were confined at Savannah. Yet the officers' ration in Charleston jail-yard and at Columbia was not equivalent to that received by the enlisted men at Andersonville. The greater degree of suffering, disease encroachment, and mortality pertaining to the men must be ascribed to foul water, overcrowding, lack of shelter, absence of internal organization, order, and sanitation, and inability to secure the means to purchase vegetables, rather than to any essential variation in the rations issued by the Confederates to the two classes. The officers, save during railroad journeys, and in Charleston jail, jail-yard, and work-house, were rarely so crowded as to be seriously discommoded. The men were always huddled together like flocks of sheep. The officers, as a body, were only entirely without shelter for about a month at Columbia, although at Savannah and Macon an average of about 200 were always without shelter, while the great mass of the men never had any shelter at all. The officers were always well organized and orderly, and maintained camp and persons in the best possible sanitary trim. Inside of the prison pens for the men there was no well-recognized head. There was no sanitary police system, and the camp reeked with foul accumulations. The vicious element which is always considerable in large bodies of men, collected under any circumstances, was augmented a thousand fold by the problems of existence presented to them by rebel management at Andersonville. Prisoners who had money or other valuables were plundered and

murdered while they slept. No one was safe who was known to have or was suspected of having any thing of value, however small. Robberies and murders were even committed in open day. Vigilance committees were organized, and many of the fiends met their just deserts at the hands of their most pitiable distressed fellow-creatures. One miscreant taken in the act of robbery and murder was actually torn to pieces by the prisoners on the 20th of June, 1864.

On the 11th of July, 1864, six wretches were hung in the prison inclosure for murder and robbery, after a fair trial and hearing at the hands of their fellow prisoners. While matters were somewhat mended thereby, a feeling of suspicion and insecurity yet prevailed. "Every man's hand was against his neighbor, and every man's hand against him." No internal order or harmony existed. Camp pollutions were unremoved, the dead and dying were every-where to be seen, exposed and unprotected in the glaring sun, the rain, and the chill of southern nights; pestilence raged at noon-day, and robbery and murder were rife at night. Men were shot down at the caprice of the guard, human life was held in such slight esteem, there seemed so little object in prolonging it that prisoners deliberately walked out over the dead line to have an end put to an existence which had become intolerable. Subject to such destitution, in the midst of such surroundings, filled with terror and apprehension, how could it be otherwise than that the reason of men should be dethroned. Many became mumbling imbeciles, without thought or feeling. They were like blasted plants. A circulation indeed went on in the interior, but the external textures went more and more to decay, until finally the illusion of life after death was perfect.

While environment had considerable to do with a better preservation of the officers, yet to the diet obtained at Savannah, and the Confederate money procured from speculators at Charleston and Columbia on sight drafts, must be attributed, in no small degree, their superior physical state. But for these sources of supply and relief, the



mortality with us must have been terrible, and the condition of the survivors almost as deplorable as that of the enlisted men. No indebtedness, however, is rested under to the Confederate prison bureau on account of what they gave us at Savannah, and what we obtained ourselves at the other points. At the former place, as mentioned elsewhere, military necessity and local sentiment were the factors which together brought about our sufficient feeding, while at the other places official cupidity was the touchstone to the favor we received. The prison commandants were not more blind to see them than were the speculators, who held promises to pay, in gold or greenbacks, more valuable than Confederate money, that the days of the Confederacy were numbered. They desired to get the most profit out of the little remaining time, and so, for a commission on sales, they allowed Confederate money to be sold to the prisoners. Then, that the crop thus sown might be gathered by proper hands, they kindly permitted a sutler to purvey provisions and necessaries at about four hundred per cent advance upon the retail prices prevailing outside the camp among the citizens. Let no one imagine that there was any high living, any luxury enjoyed by the officers. The fresh meat at Savannah, and the Confederate money, afforded just enough variety in food to arrest disintegrating processes, to build up a little, and admit of holding out against the combined assaults of famine, exposure, depression, and vermin, until "General Exchange or General Sherman" released them.

The number of Union officers captured and held as prisoners during the war is given as seven thousand and ninety-two (7,092). The deaths among these, according to the Confederate returns, number one hundred and eleven (111), a mortality rate of one and fifty-six hundredths (1.56) per cent, or one death to sixty-four prisoners. The United States authorities, however, have discovered one hundred and nineteen (119) marked graves of officers who died in prison, and this is the mortality officially reported of Union officers who were prisoners of war by the adjutant-general of the United States army.

The Confederate returns distribute the deaths as follows: Richmond, Va., 21; Danville, Va., 8; Salisbury, N. C., 27, with only 2 known graves; Atlanta, Ga., 8, all dying from wounds; Macon, Ga., 7; Andersonville, Ga., 3; Columbia, S. C., 1; Charleston, S. C., 29; and from all other points in the South, 7. The marked graves are in number as follows: At Richmond, Va., 29; at Danville, Va., 5; at Salisbury, N. C., only 2; at Atlanta, Ga., 8; at Macon, Ga., 9; at Andersonville, Ga., 9; at Columbia, S. C., 3; at Charleston, S. C., 37; at Marietta, Ga., 8, with no death returns; and from all other points in the South, 9. Why the deaths in excess of graves—25 at Salisbury and 3 at Danville, 28 in all—were not added to the mortality as shown by graves, making a total of 147, is not explained, but evidently the adjutant-general's office hesitates to accept the Confederate returns in any instance. Any estimate of mortality, however, which might be obtained from a consideration of the reports given above, would furnish only a fractional part of the real mortality, as will probably be revealed in what is to follow.

The list appended to this volume contains the names of 2,318 Union officers who were prisoners of war from February 1, 1864, to the close of the war. It has been carefully collected and arranged, and is much more complete than any list as yet published. Among these officers the following are known to have died:

Axtell, Benj. F., Capt. 5th Mich. Cav., Richmond, Va., May, 1864.

Ballou, Orson G., 2d Lieut. 100th Ohio Inf., Richmond, Va., Feb. 6, 1864.

Bender, Wm. H., Capt. 122d Ohio Inf., Columbia, S. C., Oct. 8, 1864.

Bennett, Wm. H., Capt. 25th Wis. Inf., Macon, Ga., Aug. 10, 1864.

Berry, Joseph, 2d Lieut. 2d Mich. Inf., July, 1864.

Bishop, Edward W., 1st Lieut. 15th Conn. Inf., Salisbury, N. C., March 17, 1864.

Bohannon, D. E., Capt. 3d Tenn. Cav., Macon, Ga.

Burdicke, Chester A., 2d Lieut. 10th Wis. Inf., Charleston, S. C., Sept. 17, 1864.

Burwell, Prescot B., Capt. 26th Wis. Inf., Richmond, Va., June 28, 1864.

Caldwell, D. B., Lieut. 75th Ohio Inf.

Coulter, Samuel, Capt. 96th Ohio Inf., April 28, 1864.

Duncan, James, 1st Lieut. 9th Mich. Cav., Charleston, S. C., Oct. 26, 1864.

Duvall, Wm. M., 2d Lieut. 14th Ill. Cav., March 12, 1865.

Earl, Isaac N., 1st Lieut. 4th Wis. Cav., Nov. 24, 1864.

Eckings, T. K., Lieut. 3d N. J. Inf., Columbia, S. C.

Evans, B. W., Capt. 4th Ohio Cav. Shot at Columbia, S. C.

Ewers, Benj. F., Capt. 100th Ohio Inf., Charleston, S. C., Nov. 27, 1864.

Fairfield, O. B., 1st Lieut. 89th Ohio Inf., Columbia, S. C., Oct. 8, 1864.

Forsyth, G. D., Lieut. 100th Ohio Inf. Shot at Libby Prison, Richmond, Va.

Gilmore, John B., 1st Lieut. 72d Ohio Inf., Charleston, S. C., Oct. 19, 1864.

Goold, James B., 1st Lieut. 20th Mich. Inf., Richmond, Va., June, 1864.

Greenwood, —, Lieut. 3d Md. Inf., Savannah, Ga.

Grierson, Otto, Lieut. 45th N. Y. Shot at Macon, Ga.

Hansberry, David, Capt. 4th Ind. Bat., Columbia, S. C.

Henderson, J. H., Lieut. 14th Ill. Bat., Columbia, S. C.

Hescock, Henry, Capt. 1st Mo. Art., Columbia, S. C.

Heyer, A. M., Capt. 10th W. Va. Cav., Columbia, S. C., Nov. 7, 1864.

Horney, Paris, 2d Lieut. 110th Ohio Inf.

Huldmann, —, Lieut. 129th Ill. Inf., Columbia, S. C.

Jackson, R. W., 21st Wis. Inf., Columbia, S. C.

Lupton, Levi, 1st Lieut. 116th Ohio Inf., Charleston, S. C., Sept. 12, 1864.

\*Maltherson, E. J., Capt. 18th Conn. Inf.

McCullough, David, Capt. 75th Ohio Inf., Macon, Ga.

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\* The name of this officer, or the regiment to which he belonged, is

McGinley, James F., Capt. 3d Mich. Inf., Oct. 27, 1864.

McGinness, W., Capt. 74th Ill. Inf.

McGinness, W. A., Lieut. 19th Mass. Inf., Savannah, Ga.

McKee, S., Capt. 14th Ky. Cav.

Nute, Joseph R., 2d Lieut. 22d Mich. Inf., Millen, Ga., Oct. 8, 1864.

Parker, Edward A., Lieut. 1st Vermont H. Art. Died at Columbia, S. C., from injuries inflicted by blood-hounds.

Reynolds, James, 1st Lieut. 7th Mich. Inf., Salisbury, N. C., Jan. 2, 1865.

Riggs, Chas. H., Capt. 123d Ohio Inf., Charleston, S. C., Sept. 15, 1864.

Saxton, Luther W., Capt. 54th Ohio Inf., Macon, Ga., June, 1864.

Spofford, A. C., Lieut. 21st Ohio Inf., Columbia, S. C.

Sprague, A. W., Lieut. 24th Mich. Inf., Charleston, S. C., Oct. 14, 1864.

Stevens, W. S., Lieut. 104th N. Y. Inf.

Taylor, H. C., 2d Lieut. 21st Wis. Inf., Charleston, S. C., Dec. 12, 1864.

Thorne, Daniel, Capt. 63d Ohio Inf., Savannah, Ga., Oct. 5, 1864.

Torrey, William, Lieut.-Col. 1st Wis. Cav., Aug. 2, 1864.

Turbayne, George, Lieut. 66th N. Y. Inf. Shot at Columbia, S. C.

Waters, John M., 1st Lieut. 16th Conn. Inf., Savannah, Ga., Aug. 28, 1864.

Wenrick, J. E., Capt. 19th Penn. Inf., Columbia, S. C.

Young, A., 2d Lieut. 4th Penn. Cav. Shot at Columbia, S. C.

Fifty-two (52) names are included in the above list. While this would be a high mortality for the same length of time for any body of men equal in number, under the

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incorrect. But it has been left as it is because it represents a dead officer of the same or some other name or regiment, who would not otherwise be included in the above list.



most favorable climatic, hygienic and dietetic conditions, yet considered as pertaining to this collection of prisoners, under all the adverse influences which befell them, it borders on the marvelous. Taking twelve hundred (1200) officers as the number at Macon in the early part of June, and two thousand three hundred (2,300) as the number at Columbia at the time of their removal from there, in February, 1865, seventeen hundred and fifty (1750) is obtained as the average strength for the whole time, and fifty-two (52) deaths would furnish a mortality rate of about 3 per cent, or one death to thirty-three and two-thirds ( $33\frac{2}{3}$ ) men. It should, however, according to the rebel records, be much lower than this! They do not any-where upon their rolls carry the names of Axtell, Ballou, Parker, Bender, Bennett, Berry, Caldwell, Coulter, Duncan, Duvall, Evans, Evers, Fairfield, Gillmore, Goold, Hansbury, Hescock, Horney, Huldman, Lupton, McCullough, McGinnis, McGinley, Nute, Reynolds, Riggs, Saxton, Sprague, Stevens, Taylor, Thorne, Torrey, or Waters—thirty-three (33) in all—as dead men. Subtracting these thirty-three (33) from the list of fifty-two (52), there remain but nineteen (19) as the rebel return of deaths—one and nine-hundredths (1.09) per cent of mean strength, or one death to ninety (90) men. But this wonderful showing is yet much too high. The prison officials who had charge of the returns were too modest by over one-fourth. While they forgot that Lieutenant Parker, who was killed by blood-hounds at Columbia, S. C., was dead, five (5) of the nineteen (19) deaths they did return were shot to death by rebel guards for no offense at all. These were Lieutenants G. D. Forsyth, 100th Ohio Infantry; Otto Grierson, 45th N. Y. Infantry; T. K. Eckings, 3d N. J. Infantry; — Turbane, 66th N. Y. Infantry; and A. Young, 4th Penn. Cavalry. These might not improperly have been excluded as caused by an epidemic affection, since deaths from epidemic agencies are not considered in making up the ordinary death rate percentages among troops, and consequently the mortality would have been reduced to fourteen (14), a death rate percentage to average number

of about eight-tenths ( $\frac{8}{10}$ ) per cent, or one death to one hundred and twenty-five (125) men.

If the accuracy of such a mortality report as the above can be credited, it is a singular fact that over one-fourth ( $\frac{1}{4}$ ), or one out of every four (4), of all the deaths occurring according to their reports, among seventeen hundred and fifty (1750) Union officers prisoners of war for one year were directly occasioned by gunshot injuries at the hands of those who had them in charge. Even yet taking part in the production of a mortality percentage of one and nine hundredths (1.09), there is a true epidemic element, namely, yellow fever. Four (4) of those reported are known to have died of this disease at Columbia alone, as follows: Captain J. E. Wenrick, and Lieutenants R. W. Jackson, A. C. Spofford, and J. H. Henderson. If these are counted out, there only remain, according to Confederate reports, ten (10) deaths from all other causes than violence and yellow fever, about fifty-seven one-hundredths ( $\frac{57}{100}$ ) per cent, or one death to one hundred and seventy-five (175) men.

In addition to the fifty-two (52) whose names have been given, five (5) others are known to have died whose names are now forgotten, and are not included in the list of deaths already given. One of these, an officer of a Tennessee regiment, died at Macon, Ga.; one in Charleston jail-yard; one was shot near Columbia, S. C., while trying to escape from a railroad train; one, according to the statement of Major Van Buren, 6th New York Cavalry, was murdered by guards at Augusta, Ga., on the night of November 30, 1864, because he protested against their robbing him, and one, an officer of a Kentucky regiment, was kicked to death by Dr. Todd, a rebel surgeon, in a hospital at Rykersville, near Charleston, S. C. This Todd claimed to be a brother of Mrs. Lincoln, and gloated over brutality which should have shamed a savage. Here, then, are fifty-seven (57) deaths which can be vouched for—a mortality percentage of three and one-fourth ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ), or one death to thirty and seventy-hundredths (30.70) men.

But do fifty-seven (57) deaths of which there is certain

knowledge, cover all that took place among these prisoners? Undoubtedly not; for fully one-half of the whole number transpired within the prison inclosures, and one-half is much too small a proportion of hospital to camp deaths. Lieutenant A. C. Roach, 51st Indiana Infantry, in his work upon prison life in the Confederacy, speaking of his sojourn in Charleston, S. C., says: "In the latter part of September, the yellow fever made its appearance among the prisoners. Several of my most intimate friends fell victims to this terrible scourge, and it was not until Death had marked them for his that we could induce the rebel surgeons to remove them from the dark, dank, illy-ventilated cells of the work-house to the hospital for medical treatment." Captain C. W. Brandt, 1st New York Cavalry (Report of House of Representatives on Treatment of Prisoners of War, p. 1086), reports as follows in regard to his imprisonment at Charleston, in the jail-yard: "We had no shelter from sun or rain. The sink was so illy arranged that it soon became an intolerable nuisance, productive of disease and death. The ration was miserable. . . . As the result of all this, upward of one hundred officers, who were comparatively well when taken to Charleston, died." Captain Brandt undoubtedly knew whereof he spoke, for he was taken sick himself in Charleston and sent to Rykersville hospital, where he saw the brutal Surgeon Todd kick the Kentucky officer to death and gloat over the deed.

From statements received in the spring of 1865, at Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md., from Lieutenants Samuel Harris, 5th Michigan Cavalry, and H. B. Crawford, 2d Illinois Cavalry, who had been in the prison hospital at Columbia, S. C., not less than twelve (12) deaths must have occurred there alone. While prisoners were loath to go out to the hospital, yet, when they became wholly listless, apathetic, and indifferent, they were sent out by their comrades, because they had exhausted all the resources they possessed for ministering unto them, and had reached the conclusion that it was to the best interests of all to try the hazard of the hospital. The camps and hospitals were always sepa-



rated, and communication between them irregular, through persons passing out and in; but the impression conveyed through general report was that a very considerable mortality prevailed among the inmates. Again, while it has been shown that the conduct of the guards was brutal, we would by no means have the temerity to assert that over one-fourth of all the deaths reported by the rebels—one out of not quite every four—were the result of violence and wanton shooting. This would form too large a proportion of violent to disease deaths for even rebel prisons. During the sanguinary conflict of the War of the Rebellion the number of killed, and those who died from wounds and injuries, was ninety-three thousand, four hundred and forty-three (93,443), to two hundred and ten thousand, four hundred (210,400) deaths from disease and unknown causes, or in the proportion of one (1) to three and one-fourth ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ). During the Mexican War, one thousand, five hundred and forty-nine (1,549) were killed or died of wounds, to eleven thousand, three hundred and forty-seven (11,347) of disease, or one (1) to seven and one-third ( $7\frac{1}{3}$ ).

By referring to the list of 52 deaths, it will be seen that Ohio furnishes sixteen (16) of the number. Among the two thousand, three hundred and eighteen (2,318) prisoners, there were two hundred and fifty-four (254) Ohio officers—a death rate percentage of six and three-tenths (6.3), or one death to fifteen and seven-eighths ( $15\frac{7}{8}$ ) men. Michigan had eighty-eight (88) prisoners, with eight (8) deaths—a mortality percentage of nine and two-tenths (9.2), or one death to eleven (11) men. Wisconsin had fifty-three (53) prisoners, with six (6) deaths—a mortality percentage of eleven and three-tenths (11.3), or one death to eight and five-sixths ( $8\frac{5}{6}$ ) men. Consolidating the three states, an aggregate is obtained of three hundred and ninety-five (395), with thirty (30) deaths—a mortality percentage of eight and ninety-three hundredths (8.93), or one death to thirteen and one-sixth ( $13\frac{1}{6}$ ) men.

The returns from these states have been obtained from the state rosters published since the war, and from prison records of deaths. They are very nearly accurate and



complete with the exception of Ohio, the rosters of whose cavalry regiments have not yet been published. When these are accessible, the mortality percentage will probably be found as high as that of Michigan or Wisconsin. There is no reason why a greater mortality should have prevailed among the officers from these states than among those from other states—in fact, it is believed that some other states, as for instance, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, and Tennessee, would exhibit a greater mortality than either Ohio, Michigan, or Wisconsin.

The mortality among the Union officers from these three states may therefore be accepted as fairly representing the mortality among the two thousand, three hundred and eighteen (2,318) officers who were prisoners of war from February 1, 1864, to the end of the war. A death rate percentage of eight and ninety-three one hundredths (8.93) among these would give a mortality of 207. It would hardly be fair to apply this mortality percentage to all the officers who were prisoners—seven thousand and ninety-two (7,092)—since in the earlier years of the war prisoners were much better quartered, better fed, and better treated. The only data which is available for determining the mortality among four thousand, seven hundred and seventy-four (4,774) officers remaining after subtracting two thousand, three hundred and eighteen (2,318), is the death rate percentage of United States troops serving in the southern interior region, east, for thirty-one years, from 1829 to 1860. This, exclusive of cholera, was four and one-half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) per cent, or one (1) death to about twenty-three (23) men. A mortality percentage of four and one-half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) among four thousand, seven hundred and seventy-four (4,774) men would give two hundred and fourteen (214) deaths, and two hundred and seven (207) deaths added to these would make a total of four hundred and twenty-one (421) deaths for the whole number of officers—seven thousand and ninety-two (7,092).

In arriving at so low a death rate percentage as four and one-half ( $4\frac{1}{2}$ ) per cent, the Confederates have been given the benefits of any doubts and of the most favorable

estimates possible. It is well known that their clerical force was sadly inefficient, and, in a considerable measure, the deficiencies in their reports are undoubtedly due to incompetent and ignorant clerks. Yet, aside from all this, in all matters relating to Union prisoners of war, there was such lying and duplicity on the part of the Confederate authorities as to render absolutely unreliable all their statements concerning them.

We may here contrast the above mortality statistics with those of Johnson's Island, where Confederate officers, prisoners in Union hands, were confined. The average number of prisoners from November, 1863, to April, 1865, about one year and a half, was about twenty-five hundred (2,500). During this time there were forty-five (45) deaths, one and eight-tenths (1.8) per cent, or one (1) death to fifty-five and fifty-five hundredths (55.55) men. These figures are obtained from a report of I. G. W. Steedman, M.D., Colonel 1st Alabama Volunteers, appended to a Confederate account of prison life on Johnson's Island. It is a notable fact that not a single death occurred there from violence inflicted upon a prisoner by a guard.

According to the United States official reports, there were captured by the Union forces thirty-five thousand, seven hundred and eighty-two (35,782) rebel officers, five hundred and ninety-seven (597) of whom died in prison, a mortality rate of one and sixty-seven hundredths (1.67) per cent, or one (1) to fifty-nine and ninety-three hundredths (59.93) men. This mortality is in almost exact correspondence with that of the forces of the United States army in the northern division for twenty-one (21) years, from 1839 to 1860, which was one and sixty-eight hundredths (1.68) per cent, or one (1) in fifty-nine and six-tenths (59.6) men.

The deaths of Union officers who were prisoners of war, as furnished from the adjutant-general's office of the United States army, are based upon the Confederate mortality returns and upon the showing of graves at various points in the South. That only a fractional part of the

deaths are thus represented admits of no reasonable doubt when the exhibit is critically examined. For instance, at Columbia, S. C., the Confederates report one (1) death, and the graves reveal three (3), while we have given the names of fifteen (15) officers who died there, and can vouch for one more whose name is lost. Then, at Savannah, there is no note of either deaths or graves, while in the list are the names of four officers who died there. The writer can certify to the death at that point of Lieutenant McGinnis, 19th Massachusetts Infantry, because he knew him well and saw his dead body in the prison pen; and the death of Lieutenant Greenwood in the hospital outside was made known through the comments of the Savannah papers respecting his interment in the city cemetery. It is believed that these four form but a small minority of those who gave up the ghost at Savannah, since a recollection is retained of men apparently in the last stages of dissolution who were borne out to the hospital and were forever after lost to us. Again, at Macon, the Confederates report seven (7) deaths against nine (9) marked graves. The mortality in the prison camp alone fully covers these figures; and a greater number perished in the prison hospital at that place, as hospital attendants among the Union officers have testified. When, too, it is remembered that Macon was a point at which Union officers were confined as prisoners of war from very near the commencement of the struggle, and all through it, how can it be otherwise than that such a death statement should be held in discredit? Only seven (7) deaths, or, as the graves show, nine (9)! This during a period of four (4) years, with, at times, as many as fourteen hundred (1,400) men, numbers of whom were suffering from severe, and even mortal wounds, received upon the field of capture, and many of whom were debilitated and diseased in consequence of long confinement and starvation in Libby prison. The idea of any such low mortality among men situated and circumstanced as they were is preposterous. In the best selected and ar-



ranged quarters, furnished with every demand of dietary, clothing, and care, a similar number of perfectly healthy men, in the same time, would present a greater mortality rate.

From Richmond, only twenty-one (21) deaths are reported, with twenty-nine (29) graves permitting identification. From Salisbury, twenty-seven (27) deaths, with only two (2) known graves; Charleston, twenty-nine (29) deaths, with thirty-seven (37) graves; Atlanta, eight (8) deaths, all from wounds, and eight (8) graves; Andersonville, where only a few officers were confined, three (3) deaths, with nine (9) graves; Danville, eight (8) deaths, with five (5) graves; Marietta, Ga., no return of deaths, but eight (8) graves; and from all other points in the South, seven (7) deaths reported, with nine (9) graves. Such mortality statistics bear upon their face the stamp of utter unreliability. Until the spring of 1864, Richmond was the central point of confinement for Union officers. From the first Bull Run, from the bloody fields of the Peninsula, the second Bull Run, Chancellorsville, Mine Run, the Shenandoah Valley, and from innumerable sanguinary fields in Eastern and Western Virginia and Eastern Tennessee, scores and scores of wounded Union officers were sent to Richmond as prisoners, and a very considerable number of them died there. Yet only eleven (11) are reported as having died of wounds. That this, the grand receiving and retaining place for captured wounded officers, from the most extensive theater of military operations in the whole course of the war, should furnish a return of but twenty-one (21) deaths from all causes—injuries and disease—a smaller number than reported from Charleston or Salisbury—surpasses belief. That it by no means represents the actual mortality, is evidenced by the known graves, numbering twenty-nine (29), an excess of eight (8) over the returns, and a difference of thirty-eight (38) per cent. At Charleston, the discrepancy amounts to twenty-seven and one-half ( $27\frac{1}{2}$ ) per cent—twenty-nine (29) deaths against thirty-seven (37) graves. And if, at Salisbury, but two (2) graves can be recognized from



twenty-seven (27) deaths returned, and, at Columbia, but three (3) out of fifteen (15) known to have died there, only one (1) death having been reported, how many bodies of Union officers, prisoners of war, repose at Richmond, Charleston, Salisbury, Macon, Columbia, Savannah, and all over the South, in unmarked, unknown graves, and are unaccounted for upon the Confederate rolls? It will never be known until regimental muster rolls are carefully examined, and all not accounted for are added to the list of victims of southern prison pens.

That a great excess of deaths, as compared with the Confederate returns, happened also among the Union enlisted men who were prisoners of war, admits of no question. For instance, only two (2) deaths of enlisted men are reported from Savannah, when it is well known that hundreds died there. Again, at Camp Ford, Texas, the rebels report only one (1) death, the graves showing two (2), while prisoners estimate the mortality at not less than seven hundred (700). Also, at Charleston, according to rebel reports there were only one hundred and sixty-two (162) deaths, while three hundred and fifty-one (351) graves have been found. At Salisbury, too, they reported four thousand, six hundred and forty-nine (4,649) deaths, against a discovery of graves numbering twelve thousand and thirty-four, a difference of seven thousand, three hundred and eighty-five (7,385). On every march, on every railroad journey in the Confederacy, these martyrs for the Union fell by the wayside, to be buried like beasts, and the only record which may be had of them is in the Book of Everlasting Life. If the real number of those who died in imprisonment, and within six months after exchange, could be ascertained, it would exceed fifty thousand (50,000).

Such systematic falsification of death occurrences were practised to hide the enormities of their treatment of the soldiers of the Union who unfortunately fell into their hands. When their fearful inhumanity was charged against them, their own mortality figures were paraded as disproving it, and, even to this day, constitutes their main

basis of defense. The Confederacy was founded upon fraud, and in making statements in regard to prisoners of war no departure was made from the line marked out upon starting. Yet, when the recklessness of despair had settled down upon them, the truth was revealed in the records of Andersonville; not, indeed, through rebel instrumentality, but, because, from desperation, indifference, and indolence, Federal prisoners were assigned to the care of the mortality returns. Then became available, for its confirmation and vindication, that other Golgotha—Salisbury—where the earth revealed the horrid secrets which the rebels flattered themselves they had buried beyond human resurrection. Not all, however, has yet been dragged up into the light. Thousands of Union soldiers—men and officers—not represented in any mortality estimates of prisoners of war so far issued from the Adjutant-General's office of the United States army, are interred in Southern soil where no surface trace exists to fix their resting place.

In regard to the manner and local place of interment of those of the Union officers who died in rebel prisons, we possess no positive information. None of the comrades of the deceased were permitted to accompany the remains to the graves prepared for them. The invariable answer to all requests to be accorded the privilege of paying the last sad tribute of respect to the mortal body in consigning it to the tomb, was that the place of intended sepulcher was so far removed that the walk would prove too much for our physical strength. It was only when such privileges were petitioned for that they ever evinced any concern for our physical condition. The intelligence has been derived from officers who have been at the hospital at Columbia that they had there seen a rough, unplanned pine box, with a corpse in it, enveloped in an old blanket or such clothing as was upon it at the time of death. It was the expressed opinion of some, who had the best opportunity of knowing, that Confederate *economy* could not be better exemplified than in the burial of Union officers, since one box was made to serve for all, the body being

removed from it at the grave, and the box thus held in readiness for the next corpse which might require it.

Concerning one interment, however, there is more definite knowledge. Lieutenant Greenwood, of the 3d Maryland Infantry, died in the hospital at Savannah. A lady in that city, who had known him, bought a lot in the cemetery at her own expense and had him decently buried. The "Savannah Daily Republican" editorially denounced this as "an outrage upon the gallant dead buried there; a pollution of the sacred soil with the bodies of those who burn our houses, orphan our children, and ravish our wives." The article also declared that their dead in Federal hands received no such care. In an article noticing the above, the editor of the "Savannah Daily News" said: "Such articles are no credit to the Southern people. We have *abundant* evidence that our dead are decently buried, and it is nonsense to spend so much time and ink over so small a matter; we can afford to be magnanimous and Christian even if our enemies are not."

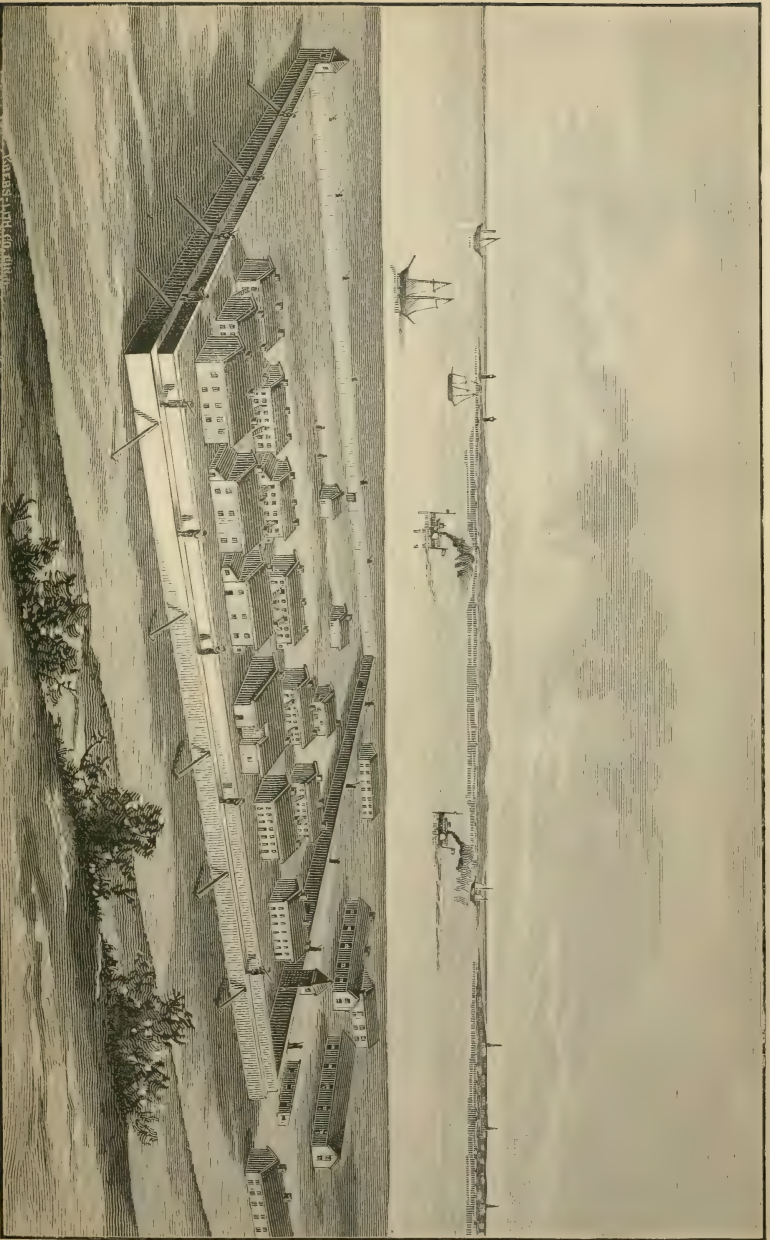
## CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT WAS FURNISHED TO CONFEDERATE PRISONERS—CLOTHING—ACCOUNT OF TREATMENT BY A CONFEDERATE OFFICER—TESTIMONY OF A CONFEDERATE SURGEON—CIRCULAR ORDERS FROM THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL AS TO TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.



AT the commencement of the war many of the Northern States armed and uniformed their troops before turning them over to the United States government. Quite a number—among others Ohio—had selected a gray uniform. Upon entering the United States service the gray uniforms were discarded and returned to the state authorities, and blue substituted. This gray clothing, of which there was quite a large stock on hand, new and unused, was greatly superior in quality to the United States regulation uniform, and it was subsequently made use of for the purpose of clothing rebel prisoners of war, particularly at Camp Douglas (Chicago), at Johnson's Island, and Camp Chase (Columbus, Ohio). Those who have seen Confederate troops in the field and Confederate prisoners of war in the North can testify to the fact that in general the latter were clothed better than the former. Rebel prisoners in the North were always supplied with clothing commensurate with their needs. It is also generally familiar to those who had knowledge of prisoners of war that exchanged rebel prisoners were objects of envy to their comrades in the rebel army, on account of their better physical appearance and dress. While the United States government was thus dealing out clothing with no stinted hand, the Confederacy not only never supplied the Union prisoners with any thing but a few rotten, ragged, lousy blankets, but appropriated to its own use sup-







plies forwarded to them by the government, sanitary and Christian commissions, and private citizens.

Respecting the treatment of Confederate officers in northern prisons, the following extracts are presented, taken at random from a work entitled "Camp, Field, and Prison Life," by W. A. Wash, captain C. S. A., who was confined on Johnson's Island:

"I am glad to say that prison life—in so well selected, arranged, and conducted a place as this—has been far more agreeable than I anticipated. But of course there is no patriotic soldier who would not rather be battling and suffering for his country than to stay in an enemy's prison, though lounging in ease, opulence, and security. . . . The squad I was in was to occupy Block 4. I got room No. 19, having only four beds in it. Myself and three lieutenants filled the beds. We did not have to increase our number. Our building contained eighty prisoners, divided into two messes, there being a dining and cook room for each, and a stove tolerably well supplied with vessels. Our cupboard ware consisted of tin plates, tin cups, knives, forks, and spoons, and though rustic in appearance, they served our purpose as fully as a lord's outfit. Our rations were the same as issued to the Federal soldiery, consisting of baker's bread, beef or bacon, coffee, sugar, rice, hominy, vinegar, soap, and candles. My mess employed two regular cooks, at \$15 per month each. . . . Having some days previous made a requisition, and my appearance being a sufficient voucher that the articles were needed, I, on the 10th day of June, drew from Uncle Abraham's bounty a pair of pants, socks, and drawers. . . . The other day, a jolly fellow said: 'If a body couldn't live easy, laugh, and grow fat here, he ought to die, for we have nothing to do but to eat, drink, sleep, and be merry.' . . . Our sutlers are driving quite a brisk trade now. Twice each day they bring a wagon load of vegetables, provisions, and all kinds of stuff, and at night all is gone. When money comes for a prisoner, it is retained at head-quarters on the outside, and credited to him on the sutler's book. The sutler gives us checks to any amount

desired, we at the same time giving him an order on the post commandant for an equivalent sum. . . . To-day we had for dinner, besides our regular fare, green apple pies, honey, pickles, and ice water, and old Kentucky ham, butter, and biscuit graced our board at tea time last evening. Then we often have baked beef and potatoes, and every few mornings some splendid hash, seasoned with red pepper and onions. Where's the lord, with his gorgeous mansion, rich china, and silver plate, and servants in livery, that, according to station, outlives us? . . . We dine about noon; but before that—an important item—our mail comes in at ten o'clock. Just after dinner, Mr. Sutler brings in yesterday's New York papers, which we buy in great numbers and read with avidity. All the afternoon, a beautiful span of spirited bays are busy hauling in wood for the various messes to cook with. I forgot to mention that early in the morning the ice wagon comes in, and a little later the milk vender, each giving us a very good article at a fair price, and their supply is seldom equal to the demand. And I didn't say that our rations are brought in and issued to the various messes about nine o'clock each day. . . . After the drum beats for retreat and the flag goes down, which is about sunset, no prisoner is allowed to leave his quarters. At nine o'clock, the garrison band regales us with several spirited tunes, and at the tap of the drum at half-past nine, all lights in the prison must be extinguished." . . .

"All things considered, the whole premises are kept remarkably clean and healthy. Captain Scoville, who has charge of the internal affairs of the prison, visits all parts of the institution frequently, and is very kind in listening to the various questions and supplying the wants of the prisoners. When a lot of prison birds come in, each is given an empty straw tick, and they go out in squads to a barge of straw at the landing, and in a little while come back with their ticks stuffed full. . . . Several evenings in each week, the big gate facing the lake is opened, and Confederate detachments of perhaps a hundred allowed to go and bathe in the lake; and, as most all are



glad of the opportunity to get out of the walls and into the water, we have to take it by turns."

According to this description of a northern prison for Confederate officers (and it is but a fair sample of all northern prisons for Confederates, rank and file alike), it



does not seem to have been a very bad place, particularly to Federal officers who suffered confinement at Libby, Macon, Charleston, and Columbia. The rations they received at any of these places and the accommodations they had would gladly have been exchanged for access to the garbage barrel and for quarters in the cow-shed of any respectable, well-regulated family in the North.

However, lest it may be charged by some overzealous southern defender that Captain W. A. Wash, of the Confederate States Army, was a clay-eater, and did not know what living was when he went to Johnson's Island, it is thought best to bolster up his statements by the following letter, published in the "Richmond (Va.) Examiner," from a rebel surgeon, who was also on Johnson's Island:

"The sleeping accommodations were very comfortable, consisting of a bunk with straw bed; and if the individual has no blanket, one is furnished, and he is allowed to buy as many more as he wants. Every room has a good stove and is furnished with a sufficiency of wood, which the prisoners have to saw for themselves after it is brought to their doors—by the way, a very good exercise. The prison consists of thirteen large buildings of wood. The space of ground inclosed is sixteen acres, of which the prisoners have full privilege to exercise in, to sing southern national songs, to hurrah for Jefferson Davis, and to play ball or any other game they see fit.

“The rations are exactly the same as issued to the garrison, consisting of fresh beef, pork, baker’s bread, sugar, coffee, beans, hominy, salt, soap and candles. Besides these, up to the time I left, there was a sutler’s store inside of the inclosure, from which we could obtain any kind of vegetables or meats, or nick-nacks, if we chose. We could purchase any thing we wanted. Clothing and eatables were allowed to be sent to the prisoners by their friends in the North in any quantity, and money also without stint.

“When I left the island the excitement about the release of the prisoners by a force from Canada was at its highest pitch, necessarily causing the garrison to be reinforced. This, coming so suddenly, found the commissary stores on the island deficient, and the rations for both prisoners and garrison were somewhat curtailed. The sutler was also sent away, and the prisoners still more restricted. I hope, however, before this time things are pursuing the even tenor of their way, and that the prisoners are enjoying themselves as heretofore. We had the privilege of writing as many letters as we chose and when we chose, of course subject to certain restrictions. We could purchase writing materials in any quantity.

“The officers over the prisoners have at all times conducted themselves as gentlemen, and have been very kind and lenient; nor do they suffer the prisoners to be insulted or abused in any way.”

The following are copies of orders relating to the treatment of the rebel prisoners in the hands of the United States authorities:

[Circular.]

OFFICE OF COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS.

*Washington, D. C., April 20, 1864.*

By authority of the War Department the following regulations will be observed at all stations where prisoners of war and political or state prisoners are held. These regulations will supersede those issued from this office July 7, 1862.

I. The commanding officer at each station is held ac-

countable for the discipline and good order of his command, and for the security of the prisoners, and will take such measures, with the means placed at his disposal, as will best secure these results. He will divide the prisoners into companies, and will cause written reports to be made to him of their condition every morning, showing the changes made during the preceding twenty-four hours, giving the names of the "joined," "transferred," "deaths," etc. At the end of every month, commanders will send to the commissary-general of prisoners a return of prisoners, giving names and details to explain "alterations." If rolls of "joined" or "transferred" have been forwarded during the month, it will be sufficient to refer to them on the return according to forms furnished.

II. On the arrival of prisoners at any station, a careful comparison of them with the rolls which accompany them will be made, and all errors on the rolls will be corrected.

When no roll accompanies the prisoners, one will immediately be made out, containing all the information required, as correct as can be, from the statements of the prisoners themselves. When the prisoners are citizens, the town, county and state from which they come will be given on the rolls under the headings, rank, regiment and company.

At stations where prisoners are received frequently and in small parties, a list will be furnished every fifth day—the last one in the month may be for six days—of all prisoners received during the preceding five days. Immediately on their arrival prisoners will be required to give up all arms and weapons of every description, of which the commanding officer will require a list to be made.

When prisoners are forwarded for exchange, duplicate parole rolls, signed by the prisoners, will be sent with them, and an ordinary roll will be sent to the commissary-general of prisoners.

When they are transferred from one station to another, an ordinary roll will be sent with them, and a copy of it to the commissary-general of prisoners.

In all cases the officer charged with conducting prison-

ers will report to the officer under whose orders he acts the execution of his service, furnishing a receipt for the prisoners delivered, and accounting by name for those not delivered, which report will be forwarded, without delay, to the commissary-general of prisoners.

III. The hospital will be under the immediate charge of the senior medical officer present, who will be held responsible to the commanding officer for its good order and the proper treatment of the sick.

A fund for this hospital will be created as for other hospitals. It will be kept separate from the fund of the hospital for the troops, and will be expended for the objects specified and in the manner prescribed in paragraph 1212, Revised Regulations for the Army of 1863, except that the requisition of the medical officer in charge, and the bill of purchase before payment, shall be approved by the commanding officer. When this "fund" is sufficiently large, it may be expended also for shirts and drawers for the sick, the expense of washing clothes, articles for policing purposes, and all articles and objects indispensably necessary to promote the sanitary condition of the hospital.

IV. Surgeons in charge of hospitals where there are prisoners of war will make to the commissary-general of prisoners, through the commanding officer, semi-monthly reports of deaths, giving names, rank, regiment, and company, date and place of capture, date and cause of death, place of interment, and number of grave.

Effects of deceased prisoners will be taken possession of by the commanding officer, the money and valuables to be reported to this office (see note on blank reports), the clothing of any value to be given to such prisoners as require it. Money left by deceased prisoners or accruing from the sale of their effects will be placed in the prison fund.

V. A fund, to be called the "prison fund," and to be applied in procuring such articles as may be necessary for the health and convenience of the prisoners not expressly provided for by General Army Regulations, 1863, will be



made by withholding from their rations such parts thereof as can conveniently be dispensed with. The abstract of issues to prisoners, and statement of the prison fund, shall be made out, commencing with the month of June, 1864, in the same manner as is prescribed for the abstract of issues to hospitals and statement of the hospital fund (see paragraphs 1209, 1215, and 1246, and form 5, Subsistence Department, Army Regulations, 1864), with such modifications in language as may be necessary.

The ration for issue to prisoners will be composed as follows, viz: Hard bread, fourteen ounces, one ration, or eighteen ounces soft bread, one ration; corn meal, eighteen ounces per one ration; beef, fourteen ounces per one ration; bacon or pork, ten ounces per one ration; beans, six quarts per one hundred men; hominy or rice, eight quarts per one hundred men; sugar, fourteen pounds per one hundred men; Rio coffee, five pounds ground, or seven pounds raw, per one hundred men; tea, eighteen ounces per one hundred men; soap, four pounds per one hundred men; adamantine candles, five candles per one hundred men; tallow candles, six candles per one hundred men; salt, two quarts per one hundred men; molasses, one quart per one hundred men; potatoes, thirty pounds per one hundred men. When beans are issued, hominy or rice will not be.

If at any time it should seem advisable to make any change in this scale, the circumstances will be reported to the commissary-general of prisoners for his consideration.

VI. Disbursements to be charged against the prison fund will be made by the commissary of subsistence, on the order of the commanding officer; and all such expenditures of funds will be accounted for by the commissary in the manner provided for the disbursements of the hospital fund.

When in any month the items of expenditures on account of the prison fund can not be conveniently entered on the abstract of issues to prisoners, a list of the articles and quantities purchased, prices paid, statement of services rendered, etc., certified by the commissary as correct,

and approved by the commanding officer, will accompany the abstract. In such cases, it will only be necessary to enter on the abstract of issues the total amount of the funds thus expended.

VII. At the end of each calendar month, the commanding officer will transmit to the commissary-general of prisoners a copy of the "Statement of the Prison Fund," as shown in the abstract of issues for that month, with a copy of the list of expenditures specified in the preceding paragraph, accompanied by vouchers, and will indorse thereon, or convey in letter of transmittal, such remarks as the matter may seem to require.

VIII. The prison fund is a credit with the subsistence department, and, at the request of the commissary-general of prisoners, may be transferred by the commissary-general of subsistence, in manner prescribed by the existing regulations for the transfer of hospital fund.

IX. With the prison fund may be purchased such articles not provided for by regulations as may be necessary for the health and proper condition of the prisoners, such as table furniture, cooking utensils, articles for policing, straw, the means of improving or enlarging the barracks or hospital, etc. It will also be used to pay clerks and other employes engaged in labors connected with prisoners.

No barracks or other structures will be erected or enlarged, and no alterations made, without first submitting a plan and estimate of the cost to the commissary-general of prisoners, to be laid before the Secretary of War for his approval; and in no case will the services of clerks or other employes be paid for without the sanction of the commissary-general of prisoners.

Soldiers employed with such sanction will be allowed forty cents per day when employed as clerks, stewards, or mechanics; twenty-five cents a day when employed as laborers.

X. It is made the duty of the quartermaster, or, when there is none, the commissary, under the orders of the commanding officer, to procure all articles required for

the prisoners, and to hire clerks and other employes. All bills for service or for articles purchased will be certified by the quartermaster, and will be paid by the commissary, on the order of the commanding officer, who is held responsible that all expenditures are for authorized purposes.

XI. The quartermaster will be held accountable for all property purchased with the prison fund, and he will make a return of it to the commissary-general of prisoners at the end of each calendar month, which will show the articles on hand on the first day of the month, the articles purchased, issued, and expended during the month, and the articles remaining on hand. The return will be supported by the abstract of the articles purchased, issued, and expended, certified by the quartermaster and approved by the commanding officer.

XII. The commanding officer will cause requisition to be made by his quartermaster for such clothing as may be absolutely necessary for the prisoners, which requisition will be approved by him, after a careful inquiry as to the necessity, and submitted for the approval of the commissary-general of prisoners. The clothing will be issued by the quartermaster to the prisoners, with the assistance and under the supervision of an officer detailed for the purpose, whose certificate that the issue has been made in his presence will be the quartermaster's voucher for the clothing issued.

From the 30th of April to the 1st of October, neither drawers nor socks will be allowed, except to the sick. When army clothing is issued, buttons and trimmings will be taken off the coats, and the skirts will be cut short, so that prisoners who wear them will not be mistaken for United States soldiers.

XIII. The sutler for the prisoners is entirely under the control of the commanding officer, who will require him to furnish the prescribed articles, and at reasonable rates. For this privilege, the sutler will be taxed a small amount by the commanding officer, according to the amount of his

trade, which tax will be placed in the hands of the commissary to make part of the prison fund.

XIV. All money in possession of prisoners, or received by them, will be taken charge of by the commanding officer, who will give receipts for it to those to whom it belongs.

Sales will be made to the prisoners by the sutler on orders on the commanding officer, which orders will be kept as vouchers in the settlement of the individual accounts. The commanding officer will procure proper books in which to keep an account of all moneys deposited in his hands, these accounts to be always subject to inspection by the commissary-general of prisoners or other inspecting officer. When prisoners are transferred from the post, the moneys belonging to them, with a statement of the amount due each, will be sent with them, to be turned over by the officer in charge to the officer to whom the prisoners are delivered, who will give receipts for the money. When prisoners are paroled, their money will be returned to them.

XV. All articles sent by friends to prisoners, if proper to be delivered, will be carefully distributed as the donors may request; such as are intended for the sick passing through the hands of the surgeon, who will be responsible for their proper use. Contributions must be received by an officer, who will be held responsible that they are delivered to the person for whom they are intended. All uniform clothing, boots, or equipments of any kind for military service, weapons of all kinds, and intoxicating liquors, including malt liquors, are among the contraband articles. The material for outer clothing should be gray, or some dark mixed color, and of inferior quality. Any excess of clothing over what is required for immediate use, is contraband.

XVI. When prisoners are seriously ill, their nearest relatives, being loyal, may be permitted to make them short visits; but under no other circumstances will visitors be admitted without the authority of the commissary-general of prisoners. At those places where the guard is inside



the inclosure, persons having official business to transact with the commander or other officer, will be admitted for such purpose, but will not be allowed to have any communication with prisoners.

XVII. Prisoners will be permitted to write and to receive letters, not to exceed one page of common letter paper each; provided the matter is strictly of a private nature. Such letters must be examined by a reliable non-commissioned officer, appointed for that purpose by the commanding officer, before they are forwarded or delivered to the prisoners.

XVIII. Prisoners who have been reported to the commissary-general of prisoners, will not be paroled or released except by authority of the Secretary of War.

W. HOFFMAN,

*Colonel 3d Infantry, Commissary-General of Prisoners.*

Official:

W. T. HARTZ,

*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

Official:

SAM'L BRECK,

*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

[Circular.]

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSARY-GENERAL OF PRISONERS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *June 1, 1864.*

I. By authority of the Secretary of War, the ration to be issued to prisoners of war, as announced in the circular from this office, dated April 20, 1864, is hereby modified as follows, to go into immediate effect, viz.: Pork or bacon, 10 ounces (in lieu of fresh beef); fresh beef, 14 ounces; flour, or soft bread, 16 ounces; hard bread, 14 ounces (in lieu of flour or soft bread); corn meal, 16 ounces (in lieu of flour or bread); To 100 rations: Beans or peas,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  pounds; rice or hominy, 8 pounds; soap, 4 pounds; vinegar, 3 quarts; salt,  $3\frac{3}{4}$  pounds; potatoes, 15 pounds.

Sugar and coffee, or tea, will be issued only to the sick and wounded, on the recommendation of the surgeon in charge, at the rate of 12 pounds of sugar, 5 pounds of

ground, or seven pounds of green coffee, or one pound of tea, to the 100 rations. This part of the ration will be allowed only for every other day.

II. The difference between the ration as above established, and the ration allowed by law to the soldiers of the United States army, constitutes the "savings," from which is formed the prison fund.

W. HOFFMAN,

*Colonel 3d U. S. Inf., Commissary-General of Prisoners.*





p. 147.

BIRDS-EYE VIEW OF ANDERSONVILLE, 1863.



# EXPERIENCE IN REBEL PRISONS FOR UNITED STATES SOLDIERS

AT

RICHMOND, DANVILLE, ANDERSONVILLE,  
SAVANNAH, AND MILLEN



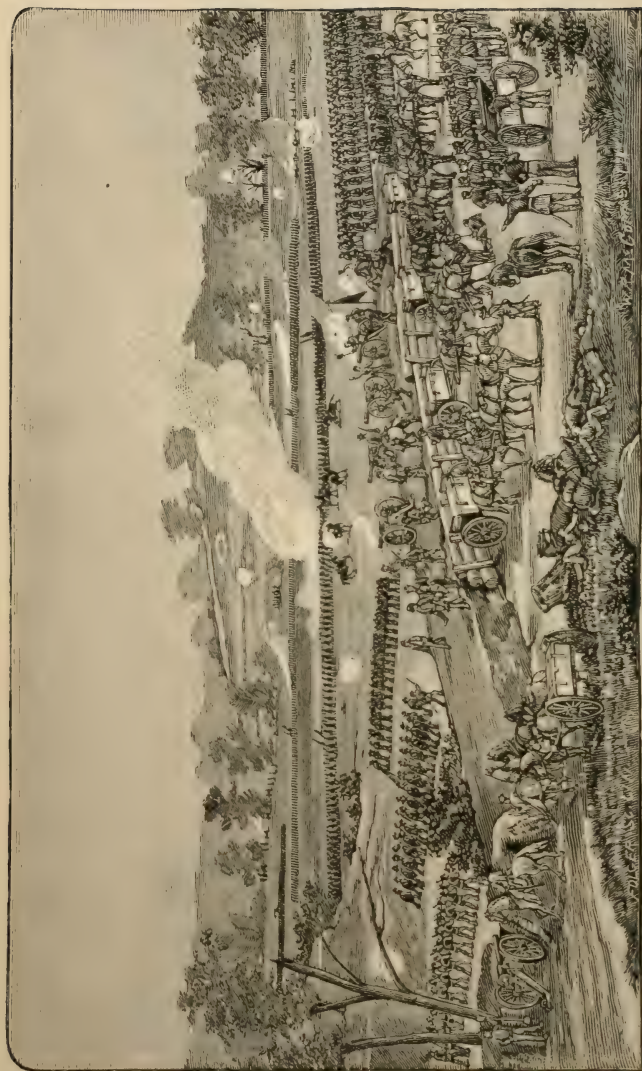
BY

HENRY M. DAVIDSON

LATE SERGEANT BATTERY "A," FIRST OHIO LIGHT ARTILLERY, JOHNSON'S DIVISION,  
ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND







BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA.



## CHAPTER XVII.

CHICKAMAUGA BATTLE—HOSPITAL—IN THE ENEMY'S HANDS—THE WOUNDED—PAROLING—HOSPITAL ATTENDANTS—WANT OF WATER, BANDAGES, AND MEDICINES—THE FIELD SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE BATTLE—ARRIVAL OF UNITED STATES AMBULANCES WITH SUPPLIES FOR THE WOUNDED--PAROLING THE WOUNDED.



HE marches and counter-marches of the 20th Army Corps, Army of the Cumberland, under General McCook, over Lookout Mountain, previous to the great battle of Chickamauga, will be long remembered by the survivors of the old "Second Division," commanded by General Johnson. Three times was this division led over this steep and rocky range, although the united strength of twelve horses was necessary to move a single field-piece over the mountains. At a very late hour on Thursday evening, September 17, 1863, after having made a forced march from early morning, with the exhausted horses nearly dropping down in harness, we were formed in line of battle near Chickamauga Creek.

With the dawn of day, however, abundant evidences appeared of the recent passage of large bodies of troops over the fields and roads. News of the evacuation of the stronghold of Chattanooga, by the rebels, reached us early in the morning; but the belief prevailed among the men that no general engagement would take place at this point. The batteries, however, were picketed to guard against surprise, as well as to prevent any advantage to the enemy in case of sudden attack. But the day wore away so quietly that our previous impressions that there would be no battle seemed confirmed.

Before sunrise on Saturday, the 19th, orders were re-

ceived to be ready to move in fifteen minutes. The division was immediately in motion, and, swinging around to the left, found itself on a good road *en route* for Chattanooga. Crawfish Springs were soon reached, and it was while halting here for rest and water that the distant roar of cannon announced the determination of the enemy to resist our further advance, and convinced the soldier that he had not been summoned there for naught.

Thus far, the glorious success of the Army of the Cumberland, under "Rosey," all the way from Nashville to this point, had won the admiration of every man in the ranks. He had led them into the very heart of "Rebeldom;" had confronted, attacked, and routed Bragg on his chosen ground, at Murfreesboro; had pushed back the rebel army three hundred miles into their own country, and had maintained his communications intact over this long distance. We had made one grand, triumphal march through the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, building bridges and repairing railroads, so that the iron horse, with his long train of supplies, might keep pace with us as we advanced. Every true soldier, therefore, felt that the Army of the Cumberland, under its gallant leader, was capable of marching anywhere it might please in the Confederacy, and of routing any force that might be sent against it. Inspired by such confidence in its commander, and with such reliance upon itself, the booming of the distant guns, now approaching nearer and nearer, brought no terror to our ranks; and, as the day advanced, and the roar of artillery and the sharp rattle of small arms told us that the tide of blood was rolling rapidly toward us, not a cheek blanched, not a nerve quivered, but all, with one accord, seemed to gird themselves for the contest—determined to win the day or perish. From a gentle knoll upon which we stood, the smoke and dust of the conflict was distinctly seen, rising in billowy volumes, as if to shut out the spectacle from the eye of Heaven.

General Rosecrans and his staff hurried past us to the scene of action, where, as it proved, his presence at that juncture was greatly needed. It was just at this time,

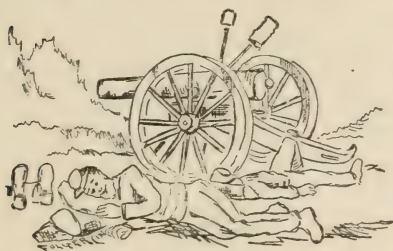
near ten o'clock in the morning, that the column filed to the right of the road and hastened to the rescue. The screaming shells passed over our heads, madly slashing through the tree-tops, severing the largest limbs from their trunks, and showering the splintered fragments among the ranks; or, taking a lower flight, dashed through columns of the men, mowing down whole files in their deadly career. In every direction were men with crushed and shattered limbs—dead, but with their bodies still warm and quivering. The scene was too horrible for description.

Our position was soon taken. Goodspeed's battery (Battery A, 1st Ohio Light Artillery), of which I was a member, held the center of the artillery of the division, we having been transferred from the extreme right to the left of the whole line of battle. The afternoon was spent in firing leisurely at the enemy massed in our front, but concealed by heavy timber, behind which they appeared to be maneuvering around us in three parts of a circle; and though they seemed maddened by desperation, and resolved to crush our line by rolling in great waves upon one point at a time, yet with equal valor and determination our forces met them, and with the point of the bayonet pushed them slowly back over the ground, during the whole of the afternoon. Among the trophies of our brigade were five pieces of artillery and four caissons, which the battery had the satisfaction to draw off the field under a terrific shower of bullets. At about eight o'clock in the evening the enemy charged our line in front, advancing with a tremendous battle-cry and delivering such a terrible and deadly fire that for a moment our whole line trembled and reeled, and seemed about to turn in complete rout, when Goodspeed's and Simonson's batteries swept the field with well aimed shell and canister, compelling the foe to fall back hastily and in confusion and disorder.

Early in the evening the division was relieved and passed back to the rear of the reserve line, where, with fence rails for pillows and the ground for a bed, we passed the remainder of the night as best we could; and as we lay in our position awaiting the dawn, there was not a



man in the command that did not realize the responsibilities of the coming day. The reflection that if the enemy



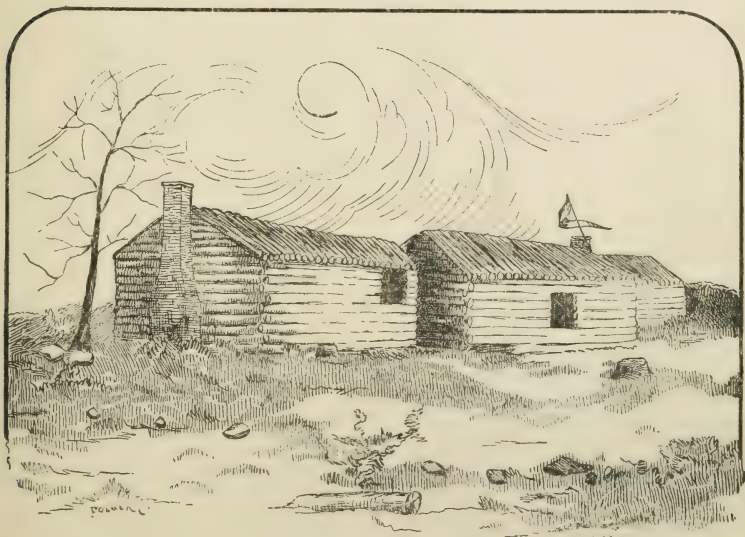
were victorious upon the morrow we should be driven back, broken and demoralized, to wander over three hundred miles of hostile country, and subjected to all the tortures of starvation, cold

and thirst, or be captured, to pass weary months in rebel prisons, nerved us quite as much for the coming crash of arms as did the commands of our officers or the glory of an anticipated victory.

At early dawn on Sunday, the 20th of September, the whole line was astir. Great trees were carried by the men with which to construct a temporary line of breastworks, in anticipation of an attack upon our position. Our anticipations were soon realized, for before the works were complete a force of the enemy, outnumbering our own by two to one, massed in our front, prepared to carry the position at the point of the bayonet. Successive charges made by them were repulsed with great slaughter. Our artillery, which had been placed about six hundred yards in the rear of the infantry lines, had not yet opened fire. At last, after due preparation, the rebels advanced in a final charge. The signal was given and the thunder of cannon rolled along the whole line, from one end to the other, in one terrible billow of sound. Hardly had one column of smoke lifted from the scene before another closed over the lines. The charge was repelled on our front; but the enemy was suddenly descried massed on our left and advancing with deadly resolve to crush our flank and turn our position. At the same time it was rumored that the hospitals in our rear were captured, that our center had been pierced, and the means of communication between the two wings of the army interrupted. Nothing daunted by this disheartening intelligence, we trained our guns to bear upon the source of the most



immediate peril and sent forth a volley of canister to meet the advancing foe. On, on they pushed, heedless of their falling comrades, whom our gallant gunners at every shot were sweeping down by hundreds. Braver men never fought in any cause, but despite their own courage the carnage was too fearful for endurance. They waver, they halt, they turn; a volley of grape and a shout of victory follow the retiring foe. The field is ours, but at a fearful sacrifice. Sixteen of our company fell—two killed



SNODGRASS HOSPITAL.

and fourteen wounded. But the victory was won; and satisfied of the futility of any further storming of our stronghold, the enemy sullenly retired.

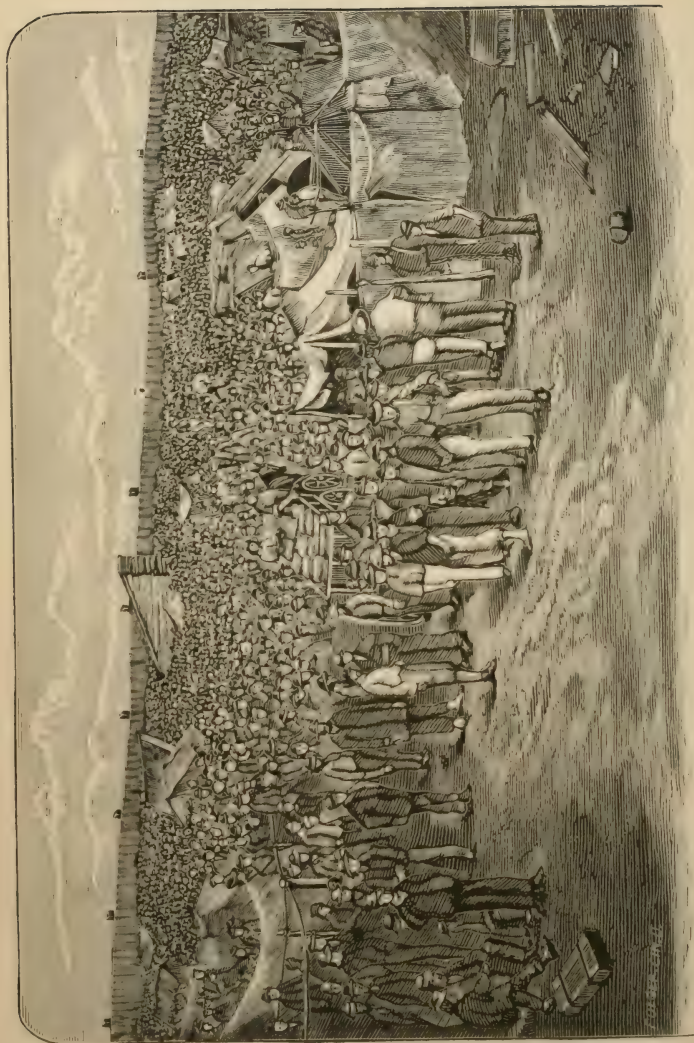
Our fallen comrades were now to be removed from the field. My services, among others, were offered for this duty, and were accepted. We carried our patients a mile or so to the rear before we could find the hospital, owing to our entire ignorance of the direction in which it lay. We finally succeeded in reaching a log hut, called Snodgrass Hospital, where the wounded were deposited.

Meantime, the line of battle had changed so entirely that the rebel skirmishers were stretching through the woods across the track we had just passed over, and the battery was apparently cut off. Under the circumstances, it was thought by the major in command of the hospital too hazardous to attempt to reach our comrades upon the field at that time, and he ordered us to remain at the hospital until matters should assume a more favorable appearance. Acting under this order, we remained, assisting the wounded and relieving their necessities to the utmost of our ability.

From this point, it was impossible to judge which of the contending parties would hold the line of hills that seemed to be the stake now fought for. The firing continued with unabated severity during the whole afternoon. General Granger's corps came up late in the day, and their presence inspired the weary combatants with new courage and vigor. As they moved to position, solid shot and shells went crashing over their heads through the timber from the rebel guns. In a short time, this corps was scattered in every direction. The firing was terrific. For the last few hours, it had been apparent that the enemy were straining every nerve to get between us and Chattanooga; but at sunset they had fallen back, and soon after our forces took possession of the ground they had abandoned. It was now dark, and under the orders of the major above referred to, we bivouacked at the hospital for the night, in the expectation of returning to our comrades on the morrow.

During the early part of the evening, several ambulances arrived at the hospital, and were immediately filled with the wounded and driven off for Chattanooga, expecting soon to return to remove the three hundred remaining, many of whom were mortally and nearly all severely wounded. But they never returned; for, during the stillness of the night, broken only by the moans of the wounded, the enemy suddenly and stealthily advanced, took possession of the hospital, and informed us that we were prisoners of war.





ANDERSONVILLE. VIEW FROM MAIN ENTRANCE.



Here is properly the beginning of my story. Our army, for the security of Chattanooga, had fallen back under cover of the darkness, and by an oversight, in the hurry and confusion of a retreat, had failed to notify the inmates of the hospital. A rebel guard was immediately stationed and a picket line thrown out in front. To escape and return to our command was now entirely out of the question; for, to the uncertainty of our ability to run the enemy's picket, was to be added a total ignorance of the position of our own army; and if we should succeed in escaping the vigilance of the former, we were by no means certain of reaching the latter. We were, therefore, compelled to submit with what grace we could. But had we foreseen what was in store for us, or realized the terrible sufferings we were to undergo, there was not a man of us but would have periled life itself in an effort to escape from that hospital.

Morning came, and disclosed an abundant field of labor. Three hundred men were lying in and around the hospital, with shattered limbs, faint with loss of blood, and stiff with the cold dews of night. What could *we* do? We had no bandages, no medicines; no food of any sort was to be found; the nearest water was three-fourths of a mile away, and there were no utensils except a dozen canteens in which to bring it. Little could be done to relieve the wants of the suffering. Soon after sunrise, at some distance in front of the hospital, a strong line of battle was formed in the rear of a rail fence, and between us and Chattanooga, from the direction of which, at intervals, heavy cannonading could be heard. Roving bands of cavalry, commissioned officers of various ranks from general to lieutenant, came to the hospital to inspect the spoils. A colonel of a Tennessee regiment, who was among the number, dismounted, and calling for the surgeon in charge of the hospital, held a long conversation with him on the state of the wounded, their necessities, the means at hand for their relief, etc. When he had mounted his horse to depart, he said: "Boys, I am from Tennessee, and my residence and plantation are a few

miles south of Nashville, on the Franklin pike. I suppose you had a good time when you camped there, feasting upon my pigs and chickens and turkeys. I hope you did, and I hope they did you good. But in less than three weeks, boys, my regiment shall camp there, and my house shall be my head-quarters." We wished the colonel, who seemed to be a hearty, good-natured fellow, a pleasant trip in making his passage over the mountains, and (we could not help adding) the Federal bayonets. It was our subsequent experience with the rebels, that no matter how gloomy their prospects, nor how badly they might be defeated, they were always on the point of performing heroic feats, and about to illuminate the world by some unexpected blaze of glory. Generals Longstreet, Bragg, Hood, Lee, and Preston also rode to the hospital on very poor horses and without escort. General Preston, however, was the only one who entered into conversation with us. He had a pleasant, affable manner in addressing the prisoners, and seemed to sympathize with those whom misfortune had brought into his power. He was a magnificent specimen of physical manhood, and the lines of his face showed the stern, unrelenting warrior in time of action, but the kind, compassionate man when the excitement of battle had passed. He wanted to know what battery that was, pointing in the direction of one that stood near. "I would like to know," said he, "for it did terrible mischief with one of mine that had orders to silence it. I could count on that battery as number one every time. It did splendid shooting." The other generals, however, indulged in the national game of brag, as usual. They told us that their army had captured ninety pieces of artillery, taken nearly one-half of our army prisoners, killed and disabled the half of what remained, while the rest, broken, dispirited, and demoralized, were trying to cross the Tennessee and retreat to Nashville, which place few, if any, were destined to reach, for Forrest's cavalry were between Bridgeport and Murfreesboro, and had torn up the railroad for miles. The booming of cannon in the near distance was a better reply to

their story than any we could make, and so we remained silent.

The few canteens we had among us were kept in constant use in bringing water for the wounded; but, with all our efforts, we could not furnish enough to allay the thirst of the poor fellows, much less to bathe their wounds. That terrible cry, "Water! water!" coming from a hundred voices at once, haunted me for days after I had left the scene. Poor fellows! We did all we could for them with the small means at our command; but, while doing our best, we knew that we could not assuage that agonizing thirst which the gunshot wound excites.

On the evening of the 22d, a Captain Reid, of Bragg's staff, rode to the hospital, and ordered all who could walk to fall in, as he was going to send them all to Richmond. Some sixteen of us tied red strings about our arms, and claimed to be regular hospital attendants, hoping by this means to be left behind, with a faint expectation of being exchanged or paroled without being carried further south. One of our surgeons protested against leaving so few men to take care of so many wounded, but without avail, the subordinate officer having no discretion to change the order. Each of those who remained was furnished with a separate parole,\* requiring him to report to the post commandant at Atlanta as soon as his services should no longer be required at the hospital. Thus we remained.

For three days and nights we were without food, either

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\* PAROLE.—"I, H. M. Davidson, private of Company A, 1st Ohio Light Artillery Regiment of the United States Army, captured at the battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, solemnly swear that I will not bear arms against the Confederate States Government, nor help, aid, or assist, either directly or indirectly, by assisting in any service of the United States Government, until regularly exchanged a prisoner of war. And that I will report to the commandant of the post at Atlanta, Georgia, as soon as the sick and wounded of the United States prisoners of war, whom I am paroled to attend, shall no longer require my services.

(Signed,)

HENRY M. DAVIDSON.

Subscribed and sworn to before me, at Chickamauga, September 22, 1863.

WM. REID,

*Capt. and Asst. Prov. Mar. Gen.*



for ourselves or our wounded comrades, and the only bandages we could procure were strips torn from old shelter tents. The tasks of these volunteer nurses, for three days and nights, hungry and weary, were by no means light in themselves; but when to them was added the necessity of denying any relief to our suffering and dying comrades, because it was not within our power to aid them, the situation became more horrible. On the evening of the 24th of September, a rebel surgeon was sent to us, who, upon learning our situation, ordered a bushel of corn meal to be sent to us, which came on the following morning. This supply, insufficient as it was for three hundred men who had tasted nothing but water for seventy-two hours, was all that was given us for the next two days. We were thankful, however, for even so small a favor, and ate our corn meal with great relish. The following morning he came again, with a kit of surgical implements. Although kind enough about the corn meal, he proved to be a haughty, overbearing man, exacting from his subordinates in rank the utmost deference, and apparently classing enlisted men as an inferior race, who, by reason of their blunted sensibilities, had little claim to sympathy or attention—a weakness unfortunately common to a large number of officers in both the Federal and rebel armies. He told the wounded soldiers that if they had staid at home and let the Confederate people alone, none of them would have been there demanding his services—a proposition probably more satisfactory to himself than to the poor fellows who stood in urgent need of his assistance. He seemed to be a skillful surgeon, but was subject to freaks and moods, not only in his answers, but in the exercise of his professional services as well; and there were times when no amount of solicitation, however urgent the case might be, could induce him to treat a wounded man, or even to examine his wound. Many a soldier died of gangrene whose life might have been saved by the timely application of the knife. My subsequent experience taught me that it was no part of the design of the rebel government to save the life of a Federal prisoner; and



that, if they could not succeed in killing him in the field, they would endeavor to render him unfit for further service to his country by cruelty and neglect. I remember one instance of this cruelty of neglect which occurred at this hospital. A man was taken to the surgeon's table to have his leg amputated. His right leg was wounded. Under the hot sun, the wound had gangrened, became putrid, and his body near the wound was filled with maggots. The surgeon cast a hasty glance at him and ordered him removed. The sufferer had intelligence to know that amputation was the only means of saving his life, and begged that the operation might proceed; but the surgeon was deaf to his entreaties, and he was taken away. He bore his sufferings like a brave man, and lived several days, although he fully realized that death was swift and certain. The boys sang and prayed with him. He arranged his little affairs so that his wife and children might know that he died for his and their country, and that in death he remembered them. And so he died, the victim of neglect on the part of those upon whom every sentiment of humanity called to assist and care for him.

These instances were by no means rare or confined to particular localities, or caused by the indifference or cruelty, whichever it might be, of individual surgeons. The almost universal testimony of our wounded prisoners corroborates the opinion that it was the deliberate plan of the Richmond government to render the least possible assistance to the sick and suffering soldiers of the enemy. The necessities of the battle field, when the contending armies are large, entail the greatest suffering upon the helpless wounded combatants. Especially is this true when a battle rages in nearly the same place for several days, and it is a matter of the highest moment that the active forces should receive the first care of their officers. But there could have been no crisis so great at this time as to justify the neglect to furnish food to the helpless and suffering enemies thrown by the chance of battle into their hands; nor was it necessary to neglect to furnish medical and surgical assistance. Probably other field hospitals were

crowded like our own, but many of our surgeons were captured with their charge, and were ready to administer to the needs and demands of their wounded comrades, even if the medical staff of the rebels was too busy with their own wounded to afford them aid. In our own field hospitals it was the custom to treat alike the wounded of both armies. The hurry and excitement of the battle never caused the Federal surgeon to forget that a wounded and disarmed foeman was no longer an enemy, but he recognized him as a man, entitled by that alone to the benefit of active human sympathy.

Seven days after the battle, in company with a comrade, I made a hasty tour of the battle field. A walk of a mile brought us to the scene of the hardest fighting on Sunday. Every tree in front of our line of works, taking the smallest as the average, contained sixty bullets, ranging all the way from one to twenty feet in height. Trees twelve to twenty inches in diameter were twisted off and shivered as if a tornado had passed over them. The earth was furrowed in every direction with the solid shot and shell that were still lying about. Back of this line and to the right, in a strip of timber, our dead were lying unburied where they fell. Many of them had been stripped of all their clothing, except a pair of drawers too much tattered and torn to be worth the taking. Every thing that could be of service had been taken away by the enemy. The appearance of these bodies, which had lain upon the ground exposed to the hot sun for several days, was too horrible for description. At intervals could be seen scores of artillery horses piled up in heaps by the bursting of shells, while dismounted guns and fragments of limbers and caissons showed the fearful havoc played by the batteries in the terrible carnage of Sunday. In various parts of the field little boys and gray-haired men were seeking and gathering together loose cartridges and cartridge boxes, and any thing else that came in their way, that could possibly be of service to their own army. Rich planters, accompanied by their wives and daughters, were roaming over the field, still red with blood, and rejoicing that there

were so many dead "Yanks" bleaching upon the fields of the "Sunny South." Among them was a citizen of some intelligence, who volunteered the information that he had the means of knowing the exact strength of Bragg's army. He said that Bragg's old command numbered 40,000 men; that it had been reinforced by Johnston with 20,000, and by Longstreet with 20,000, swelling the total to 80,000 men, exclusive of the cavalry commands of Forrest and Wheeler; and that with such a force they would march triumphantly to the Ohio river. He inquired the strength of Rosecrans's force, our means of subsistence, and source of supplies, to which we of course replied; but not being in the confidence of the War Department, we made up in imagination what we lacked in knowledge. We said Rosecrans set out to take Chattanooga, and we had reason to believe he had succeeded; that his army was only a little scouting party, which merely held the advance while several millions of thoroughly equipped and drilled troops were gathering at the several rendezvous of the North, who were about to concentrate at Chattanooga, and, forming a line, to march straight across the country to the gulf. He said he knew what he was talking about and could not credit all that we said. We assured him that our information was based upon a good degree of knowledge of the resources of the North and the temper of the people, and that if the Southern people wished to escape utter destruction they must make haste to surrender their arms and throw themselves upon the clemency of their rightful masters. Our blood was up and we would have manufactured men and munitions of war and sustenance sufficient to conquer and densely populate the whole "Southland," but we observed that the attention of our interlocutor was attracted elsewhere, and as he bade us good day we thought we heard some mutterings about the impious exaggerations taught in Northern Sunday-schools and the wonderful elasticity of the Yankee conscience. We had beaten him on his own ground and with his chosen weapons.



On the 28th of September, the wounded were all moved to a general hospital, a mile nearer to Chattanooga. It was located near a large spring of clear water, which furnished us with an abundance of that now invaluable article. The worst cases were carried upon hand-stretchers, while those whose wounds would admit were transferred in army wagons. An arrangement was here made to parole and exchange all the wounded. One hundred and ninety-six ambulances arrived from our lines to receive them; bringing, at the same time, supplies enough to last till all were taken through the lines. The ambulances, on reaching the lines, had exchanged drivers, and, in consequence, nearly every box of hard bread had been broken open and a portion of its contents abstracted. I knew this to be so, because I saw the rebel drivers filling their haversacks with the hospital stores, as well as the open boxes, as they were taken from the wagons. These boxes were placed in a commissary tent, and a guard stationed over them; but the guards took advantage of the opportunity to fill their haversacks with sugar, coffee, dried fruit, and hard bread. We complained to the chief surgeon in charge, who was a Federal officer on parole, but he made no effort to have the matter corrected, although he had entire control of the supplies. He even went further and regaled the Confederate officers with the whisky and dainties which had been sent to him for the exclusive use of the wounded. He was influenced, no doubt, by a desire to propitiate the enemy, in order to secure more gentle treatment at their hands on his arrival at Richmond, whither he was soon to be sent as a prisoner of war.

As soon as the ambulances arrived, the Confederate surgeons commenced paroling the prisoners, and continued the work until its completion. Two trips were made before all could be taken away. The last train of ambulances was loaded during a heavy thunder shower—the rain pouring down as it can pour only in the South. The men were, of course, completely drenched, but were too happy to escape from the hands of the rebels to mind it much. One of the boys who had two blankets gave them to me, as I



had none, and would probably need them, while he was going where he could procure others. The ambulances were loaded, and as we saw our comrades start for home we envied them their wounds, which had proved to them a passport to better things. As soon as they were gone, we, who remained, were informed that the next day we were to start for Atlanta. Seeing the rebels making a general raid upon the supplies sent for our hospital, we made bold to appropriate a portion for our own use, and, by this means, laid in a quantity for our journey. It was well we did this, for it constituted our only supply till we reached Atlanta. Great promises were made us of excellent prison fare at that place, and our anticipations were raised high at the glowing accounts of the plenty and even luxury. Experience, however, taught us that the plenty they so lavishly promised, was plenty of hunger, pain, and death.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

MARCH TO CHICKAMAUGA STATION—TUNNEL HILL—DALTON—  
KINGSTON—RESACA AND FORTIFICATIONS—PIES AND  
CAKES—MARIETTA SCENERY—ARRIVAL AT ATLANTA—  
TRIP TO AUGUSTA—SAVANNAH RIVER—BRANCHVILLE,  
KINGSVILLE, COLUMBIA, CHARLOTTE, N. C.—RALEIGH, VIA  
SALISBURY AND GREENSBORO—GOLDSBORO, WELDON, AND  
PETERSBURG—RICHMOND.



LITTLE past noon on the second day of October, twelve days after the battle of Chickamauga, we were ordered to form in line for a march to Chickamauga Station, seven miles from the hospital, and ten from Chattanooga. A guard, composed of citizens for the most part, armed with shot guns and old muskets and various other contrivances for shooting, and facetiously denominated "cavalry," constituted our escort. As regular soldiers, we felt humiliated at being obliged to submit to be guarded by these sneaking citizens, whose courage and patriotism increased in the inverse ratio of the danger, and who, having been but a few days before in the power of the Federal army, were provided with papers from General Rosecrans, which showed them to be true and patriotic citizens of the United States. We were marched through a timbered country, near Bragg's head-quarters, where the rebel reserve forces were drawn up in line of battle. Beyond this, at a little distance, Chickamauga creek confronted us. Reaching the ford, at which a strong guard was stationed, we halted for ferriage. A small dug-out was procured after a time, and we were taken across in parties of eight at a time. While waiting our turn, the rebels flocked around us to talk and trade; their old clothing formed the chief article of barter,

and a liberal quantity of Confederate scrip was offered to make up balances. As our "personal property" consisted principally of our apparel, we were not inclined to "swap" with them, and it was only by persistent efforts and a vigorous defense of our personal rights that we succeeded in holding to our own. We did it, however, in spite of repeated orders to exchange, and threats of violence if we did not comply.

In this respect we were more fortunate than many of our comrades who were captured at other points; for they were robbed, both officers and privates indiscriminately, on the field, of money, overcoats and blankets, of shoes and hats, even their knives, forks, spoons, haversacks, tin cups, and canteens being taken by their chivalrous captors; and this, too, under the direct observation of their commissioned officers, who not infrequently assisted in the robbery and shared in the spoils.

Being across the creek, we started for the railroad station, where we arrived in due time. A train of box cars was in waiting for us, and we were ordered to load ourselves at once. Owing to the crowded state of the cars, and the dislike of the boys to lying two deep upon the floor, the embarkation was attended with considerable delay, but about dark we got under way, and proceeded as far as Tunnel Hill, where we halted until morning. A few houses were to be seen at this place, scattered here and there along the railroad track, all presenting the dilapidated appearance so characteristic of southern villages. Tunnel Hill is a place of no particular importance, and, except for the passage of the railroad through the mountain at that point, would be nameless. At sunrise the train passed through the tunnel on its way to Atlanta. Permission being given to ride upon the outside, I took up my position on top of the car, both to escape the press and close air within, and to note the character of the country. When I entered the army it was with a determination to learn all I could, in whatever situation I might be placed. I knew that this part of Georgia would sooner or later be the theater of active mili-

tary operations, and if it should happen to me to be exchanged, and to return over the same ground with our army, all the information I could possess myself of might be turned to good account. For this reason I took notes of the principal points of interest, as far as I was able to do so, and from these notes—such, at least, of them as I was fortunate enough to preserve—the following narrative is compiled.

By eight o'clock, the train reached Dalton, a connecting point of railroads leading to Eastern and Middle Tennessee—a situation, which, if once occupied by our forces, would prove of great damage to the Confederacy. We made but a brief halt at this place, and passing on through a pleasant country reached Kingston, another railroad junction. Several hundred soldiers, with officers and citizens, were gathered at this point, apparently for no particular purpose. A train of cars, which had preceded us from Chickamauga, loaded with *debris* from the battle field, had halted here to let us pass. By ten o'clock, we reached Resaca, afterward the scene of a bloody battle between Sherman's and Johnston's armies. A large camp of state militia had been established here, and upon one of the adjacent eminences an earth-work was being constructed. Small works had been thrown up near the railroad bridge, mounting some five pieces of artillery, and a line of sand works had been built on the south bank of the river. It was evident that Bragg's main reliance was upon the natural defenses of the country about Chattanooga, and that he even doubted his ability to hold those. We improved the occasion to inform the Confederate boys who bantered us upon our rapid advance into the enemy's country, that they had commenced their fortifications too far north, but that it was better for them to keep busy at their work than to grow fat and lazy in too quiet camp duty.

Making a brief stop at this place for wood and water, the train moved on again, crossing the Etowah near extensive iron works, situated on the right of the railroad. The country was very rough, and the train wound and



coiled itself among the hills in very graceful curves. At every station and water-tank the women, girls, and boys flocked around the train with "*leather*" pies and cakes for sale. The pies were a marvelous structure; they were made by grating sweet potatoes into a kind of pulp and placing the mass between two layers of unleavened dough, after which they were baked. They were a most remarkably durable article of food. The boys declared that they became famished between the preparatory mastication of two consecutive bites, and one of them had to be "brought to" by a few crumbs from the haversack of his comrades. This took place in the car, and I only report what my informant vouched for. The pies were not difficult of digestion, but the process of deglutition was laborious and unsatisfactory.



At Marietta, we met a train-load of Georgia militia on their way to join Bragg. The same habit of bluster and conceit characterized them as had marked so many of the home guard with whom we had heretofore come into contact. Even their officers exhibited the well-known plantation manners of the southern master. The haughty air and the scornful curl of the lip struck us as extremely out of character with their situation; and we, who, being bred at the North, had never seen the proud and boastful manners of "born despots," were sometimes affected with contempt, and sometimes with merriment, by their bullying ways. The old tale of patriotic devotion, of the last ditch, the superior blood and prowess of the Southron, was rehashed by the home guard at every point. We noticed, however, that those soldiers who had met our armies in the brunt of battle, were never guilty of this safe bravery.

The only friends we had here, as well as at most places through which we passed, were the negroes, and they, under the eye of their masters, were unable to lend us much assistance. From this place, we moved directly on toward Atlanta, through a country which, in times of peace, and in the hands of an enterprising people, would be fruitful and beautiful beyond description. Coming gradually upon the town, we had a brief opportunity to note some of its environs. The city is built upon a table land, and surrounded with parks, shaded walks, and costly residences. Wealth, luxury, and idleness abounded. Ladies, gayly dressed, promenaded the streets, and fine equipages and gay turnouts met the eye in every direction. A large crowd of men, women, and the ubiquitous small boy, had gathered at the depot, expecting a train-load of wounded from Chickamauga; but finding only the "contemptible Yanks," they improved the occasion to get even with us for disappointing them. I had heard much of the modesty and lofty breeding of southern women, and was prepared to make my *congé* to ladies of the highest accomplishments. After making allowance for patriotic devotion to their cause, and for hatred of their country's foes, it does seem a strong stretching of gallantry to call them polite and refined. A true, honest-hearted woman, never loses the manners of a lady under any circumstances, much less will she resort to the use of vile and opprobrious epithets. On the whole, I prefer our northern notions of refinement. It may be an error in my training, but I confess to having felt affronted when I saw my comrades in bonds, as well as myself, spit upon (literally), even by rosy lips. We were not used to it at home.

We were confined to the cars until the order for our release came from the provost marshal, when we were formed in double rank and marched through the principal streets of the city, the little boys throwing stones at us, meanwhile, and calling us by the most obscene and opprobrious epithets. The women from their carriages waved the Confederate colors, and cheered for Bragg and victory. This latter was all right, but we felt called upon, under

the circumstances, to cheer for "Rosy," and the streets of the rebel town rang with hurrahs for our gallant commander and the stars and stripes. Up to this time, we had borne their jeers and insults in silence; but now we answered with shouts that drowned their own, and we silenced them with our good Union noise. The pen into which we were marched was an inclosure of about half an acre in area, surrounded by a board fence twelve feet high, upon which was a parapet for the guard. Before entering the place, the column was halted and our names taken, when the gates were thrown open and we entered. As the first man passed in, he was halted by a commissioned officer and robbed of all his clothing except what was necessary to cover his nakedness, together with his blanket. We knew that prisoners were robbed and sometimes stripped of their clothing by privates in the rebel army, men gathered as they were from the lowest walks of life, and often, as in all armies, pardoned from prison on condition of becoming soldiers, and in whom the instinct for pillage was superior to the sense of honor; but we did not anticipate robbery by *order* of the Confederate authorities. We were not prepared to see violated the common rules of civilized warfare, which invariably respect the private property of prisoners of war. No shelter or fire was provided for us, although the night air in Atlanta is very chilling, even at this season of the year. At 10 o'clock, a dray load of bacon and hard bread was issued *in the dark*, for which every man scrambled; and with this little episode for cheer, we passed the night shivering with cold.

At an early hour the following morning, we were all (some five hundred in number) ordered to the Augusta depot. Our march was through a busy street, lined with warehouses, stores, and banks, and the scene, in its bustle, activity, and enterprise, reminded us of our own northern cities. Evidences of wealth and commercial importance were displayed on all sides. The devastating influence of the war had not reached the fair city, and it had been benefited by its inland security.



If we had been dissatisfied with the reception accorded us by the "*beauty*" of Atlanta the day before, we were likewise unfavorably impressed with the "*chivalry*" which appeared as our escort on our departure. Airy young men walked alongside upon the pavements, enrobed in broadcloth and jewels, saluting us as dogs and bleached niggers, and shying stones and brandishing revolvers at our ranks. They impressed upon our minds that the southern idea of the term "*gentleman*" was confined to externals, in which ruffled shirt bosoms, fancy kids, and jewelry, all accompanied by billingsgate and a speech learned for the most part in "*nigger quarters*," were the leading features. Yet we may have been prejudiced, and the bricks we saw may not have been fair specimens.

The train of box cars being loaded, the whistle sounded, and we were off for Augusta. We passed slowly out of the city, by warehouses and stores, past trains of cars loaded with machinery, which had been run back to this point from Chattanooga for safety. And the boys gathered some small comfort for the indignities that had been heaped upon them here, from the thought that, in the forward march of the Union armies, this place would in its turn feel the crushing heel of war upon its bosom, and expiate the evil it had in its pride inflicted upon the helpless prisoners who had been cast upon its borders by the misfortunes of battle.

The train passed the base of Stone Mountain—a singular freak of nature. It stands in the midst of a rolling country, and is the only considerable elevation in sight. It is about half a mile in diameter at its base, and is of solid rock. How it came there, whether by some upheaval of nature, or whether it is the only survivor of a chain of elevations which were upheaved along with the rest of the great Appalachian "*wrinkle*," and left standing because it alone was able to resist the erosive action of the waters that have worn away its companions, some *savant* may be able to determine. It forms a striking feature in the landscape, and at once arrests the attention. Now and then a costly mansion house of some plantation magnate ap-



peared, and in close proximity to it the hovels of the "poor trash" and the "servants' quarters." We rolled monotonously on to Augusta, at which point we arrived at half-past five P. M. Here we encountered a crowd of citizens, negroes and soldiers changing cars for Macon, Savannah, Charleston and Columbia. Like Atlanta, Augusta had not felt a touch of the war, and its busy streets gave evidence that it was thriving while so many of its sister cities were suffering the blight of treason. While we stood in ranks awaiting orders to march, we were surrounded by women who by their looks showed a sympathy with our forlorn appearance which neither tongue nor gesture dared express. This and one other occasion were notable in our captive experience as the only glimpse of pity we caught sight of, even from those whose tenderness is most easily excited by the appearance of distress.

From the railroad station we marched to a large vacant warehouse and yard, where we remained two nights and a day. Those that could do so stayed in the building, but it was too small for our detachment, and numbers were compelled to remain in the open air. The nights were cold, and the boys who lay outside the building suffered extremely from the heavy dews. Rations were scarce and our blankets were protecting the enemy at the front. We afterward became accustomed to this kind of treatment and did not feel it so keenly as now; it was the sudden change from the generous care of our government to the brutal neglect of our enemies which made our experience so hard to endure.

While in Augusta, watermelons were smuggled among the prisoners by the guards, for which most exorbitant prices were paid. There was no hesitation in receiving greenbacks in exchange, which at that time had the same value as Confederate scrip. On the morning of the 6th of October, at an early hour, we boarded the train for Branchville, S. C. We crossed the bridge, a structure similar to the railroad bridge at Nashville, where, by some error in connecting the trains, we were delayed until four P. M. The train at last got under way, and we flew rapidly

on across a long stretch of swampy land, and through forests, from the branches of whose trees hung long streamers of fine gray moss. A dismal, weary ride it was, in our close, pent boxes. To vary the monotony, the cars midway the train became uncoupled, and the engine with one half plunged on. The engineer discovered his loss and backed up for us, and we flew on again to make up the lost time. We arrived at Branchville some time during the night. The negroes here told us that they often heard the heavy guns fired in Charleston harbor, sixty miles away. We halted here only long enough to change cars, and pushed on for Charlotte, N. C., which place we reached in just twenty-four hours after leaving Augusta. The total distance between the two places by rail is 248 miles. Charlotte seemed at that time to be a thriving little town. Whether its importance was owing to its natural advantages as a business center, we had no means of determining; but judged by its appearance, it was the most important place we had yet found in the Confederacy. The streets were lined with teams, hacks, 'busses and express wagons, and along the sidewalks were huge piles of cotton bales, and bales of cotton cloth, awaiting transportation. We passed the dark, stormy night following our arrival in a grove outside the town. The rain poured down in torrents, and our clothes were soon saturated. We had been accustomed to rain and storm without shelter, but our blankets and overcoats had kept us in a comparatively dry state, and the system had been fortified with good food and in sufficient quantity to resist the elements. Here, however, we had no food, fire, shelter, nor blanket; had ridden 250 miles in close cars, and were nearly famished. We accepted the condition as an incident of war, however, and made the best we could of it.

Next morning we shipped for Raleigh, taking a northeasterly course, and passing through a barren, desolate country. At Salisbury we passed the barracks, where, it was said, Union officers were held in solitary confinement as hostages. We reached Raleigh at midnight, changed cars, and proceeded through Goldsboro to Weldon, where

we arrived at 3 o'clock P. M. of the same day. Here we halted for a few hours, and received a ration consisting of three small crackers to each man—the first we had had to eat since leaving Augusta, on the fifth of the month, and it was now the ninth. The people here seemed to be possessed of a good deal of Union sentiment, and some of them expressed a strong desire to be under the dominion of the old flag once more. There was an undercurrent of disloyalty to Jeff Davis and the “bogus Confederacy,” which, of course, was not allowed to come prominently to the surface. One had told us that he had secreted a hundred dollars in gold, which Jeff would never get, although he expected to be conscripted in a short time, when probably Jeff would get him. The bolder citizens complained bitterly; some of the despotic course of the Richmond government, others of the beggary which the war had brought upon them. The poorer classes had been reduced to beggary, and the wealthier had been compelled by forced loans to contribute all they could spare for the support of government. True, they had received in return the Confederate scrip, but that was nearly worthless.

After changing cars, we proceeded on toward Petersburg, across an extensive bridge, which was strongly guarded, in anticipation of a cavalry raid upon it. The rolling stock of the road was in a very dilapidated condition, the cars being so worn that many of them were left behind, while the engines were so light that they could not move a full train upon an up grade. We arrived at Petersburg at midnight, and remained until the next morning, when we marched through the main street to the Richmond depot. Taking the cars here, we were soon on the last stage of our trip, in length about twenty-four miles. The country is gently rolling, and strongly fortified through the whole extent. We reached the Confederate capital on the morning of the 10th of October, 1863, and crossed the long, high bridge over the James river. The bed of this river seems to be of solid rock, the bottom being covered with large, loose bowlders, against which the water plunges and



dashes in its onward rush to the ocean. The bridge itself seems to be about half a mile in length, and is a very solid and expensive structure. The cars carried us directly into the city, and the first building that caught our eye at the end of the bridge was the arsenal, at which a negro was unloading a dray of sixty-four pound shells. Opposite the arsenal was the "Tredegar Iron Works," the main dependence of the rebels for car and locomotive work. A line of guards was stationed here, extending from the railroad to the notorious Castle Thunder, of which every one, North and South, has heard so much since the breaking out of the war. This prison is simply an old tobacco warehouse, two and a half stories high, with all the windows knocked out; a place where the Richmond authorities confined deserters, runaway negroes, and criminals condemned to death. If a Yankee prisoner escaped from confinement, and was recaptured, he was here incarcerated as a punishment.

Arrived and unloaded, we were marched to an old warehouse opposite Castle Thunder, which was in every respect the counterpart of the castle. A couple of hours after our arrival, a Major Turner came into the building and ordered us to fall into four ranks, which, being done, he announced that he had come to take our money from us, at the same time telling us that if we voluntarily surrendered it, it would be refunded to us when we were paroled or exchanged; but if we refused to comply fully with his request, he should order our clothing to be



searched, and if any money was concealed, it would be confiscated. Relying upon this promise, many of us surrendered our money, and from our detachment he collected nearly \$30,000 in sums varying from \$1,500 to \$50. Lest it may appear in-

credible that so much money should be found in a single detachment of five hundred men, it is proper to say that



we had been paid off just before the battle of Chickamauga, and had had no opportunity to send our money home before our capture; and, further, that one of us had been appointed custodian of the money of his company, all of which went to swell the perquisites of our inexorable jailer.

I am aware that it was the custom of our own government to take the money of prisoners of war as a precautionary measure, for any considerable sum left in the hands of the prisoners would have been the means of bribing the guards and opening a door to escape. But the clerk of the prison kept a cash account with each prisoner who had any money, who was allowed to draw upon it for the purchase of such articles as he might desire, and which were not included in the regular ration. Had this privilege been allowed us, many a poor fellow's life might have been saved. But not one cent of this money was ever returned to us. Probably the Richmond government never received any direct benefit from it.

We were, however, more fortunate than many of our fellow prisoners, who were subjected to the greatest indignities in order to extort their money from them. Those who escaped the rapacity of their captors upon the field were stripped to the skin in the prison and their clothing thoroughly searched for the coveted greenbacks, many times the lining being ripped out and the seams opened, lest the ingenious Yankee might have secreted them there; and even their naked persons were often examined for the treasures. The clothing thus examined was returned to the prisoners, but in a condition which rendered it unfit for wear without repair. With a still further refinement of cruelty, the prisoners were deprived of needle and thread with which to mend their tattered garments.

This part of our own experience will be treated more amply in another chapter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

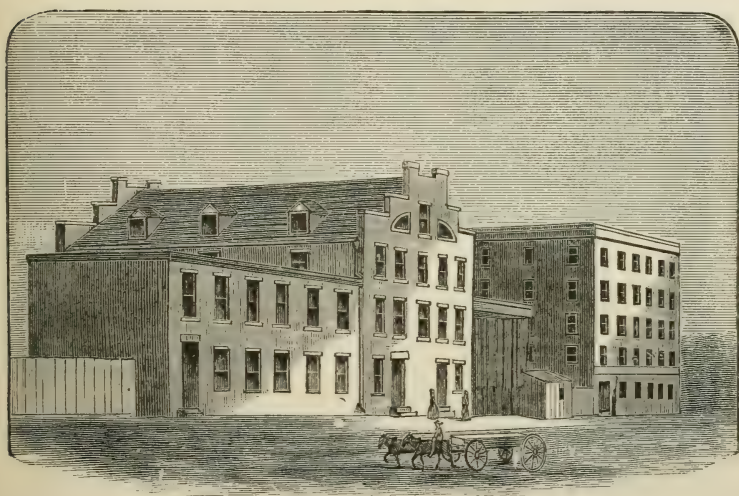
SMITH PRISON—PEMBERTON PRISON—SCOTT PRISON—LIBBY PRISON—PRISON FARE—NEWSPAPER GOSSIP—ROLL CALL—CROWDED STATE OF THE PRISON—INSECT PESTS—EFFECTS OF STARVATION—DEBATING CLUB—SPOILS—EXCHANGE—SMALL-POX—REMOVAL TO DANVILLE.



SMITH PRISON lies north-east of Libby, on a street running nearly north and south, and meeting the street upon which Libby stands, at right angles. This building was originally designed, and previous to the war was used as a tobacco warehouse and factory. It was sixty feet long by forty wide, three stories and a half high, and contained four full floors, although the upper one was very low, being directly beneath the roof. The three upper floors were filled, when we arrived, with prisoners captured at Chickamauga, who had been sent forward before us, so that our detachment, numbering nearly five hundred men, was crowded together upon a basement floor. The room contained just twenty-four hundred square feet of space, and this, which included what was occupied by thirty-one large tobacco presses, divided equally among us, would give to each man just four and eight-tenths square feet; or, deducting the space occupied by the presses, we were each allotted about four square feet of floor room. The height of the room was about eight feet. The number of cubic feet of air in the room was, therefore, nineteen thousand two hundred—about forty to a man. It is said that a man consumes one hundred gallons of air per hour, equal to a little more than thirteen and one-third cubic feet. On this basis, the air in the room was sufficient to last about three hours, supposing none of it were renewed in the meantime. Medical testimony shows, that

to afford this amount of air for consumption, each man requires two hundred and six cubic feet per hour, as the *minimum* of supply, which would require the air to be entirely changed in the room once in every four minutes. The only ventilation was by means of such crevices as were in the walls and about the doors and windows. These latter were not allowed to be raised, but they were occasionally opened an inch or two, if it could be done without attracting the attention of the guard.

The privies were constructed in the north-east corner of



SMITH AND PEMBERTON PRISONS, RICHMOND, VA.

the room, and were without any door or means of securing privacy. Water was furnished through pipes from the James river, and was the same as was supplied to the city. The stench from the privies (each floor was the counterpart of our own), the dampness caused by the dripping water from the hydrant, when the men drew it for drinking and washing purposes, together with our crowded state, the impurities of the atmosphere, and the insufficiency and the indigestible character of our food, rendered us del-

icately susceptible to attacks of contagion and other forms of disease.

The Pemberton Prison was likewise a tobacco warehouse, just south of Smith, and fronting upon the same street—its end being upon the Libby street. There was just room enough between the Smith and the Pemberton for the guard to walk. Opposite to the Smith was the Scott Prison—also a tobacco warehouse. The height and proximity of these buildings excluded the direct sunlight for the greater part of the day from those confined upon the first floor. The whole arrangement of these jails was admirably adapted to the purpose of slowly poisoning their wretched inmates, and the best that could be devised to serve the apparent design of our captors, which every thing in our treatment tended to show was to reduce us to as low a condition of vitality as was compatible with life. We were thus led to feel that the only reason we were not killed outright was, that so long as life was preserved in us, we could be used in exchange, and that to this cause, and not to any sentiment of humanity in the breasts of our jailors, we owed the doubtful favor of breathing the putrid air around us.

From the south-west windows of the Smith, we could see the infamously celebrated Libby, in which our officers were confined. This bastile is a large building, with four floors, including the basement. The two floors on which the prisoners were at that time confined fronted upon a street running parallel with the canal on the banks of the James, and extended back to the canal itself. On the north-east corner was a sign which read, "Libby and Son, Ship Chandlers and Grocers." There were forty windows visible to us, in front, some of which were secured with iron bars, while others were tightly boarded. Across a few of them old blankets had been stretched, but there were several that were entirely open to the winds and storms. Of the interior economy of this prison, we had no opportunity of informing ourselves. We knew that our officers were confined there only by seeing them occasionally near the windows in their uniform. Their



pale, haggard faces indicated that the same "chivalrous" hand purveyed to their necessities as to ours.

The cooking for the prisoners of the Smith was performed in the lower rooms of the Libby. From each of the twenty messes into which our detachment was divided, one man was detailed to go to the Libby for rations. In going thither, we passed directly beneath the end windows of the latter prison, and our officers frequently dropped a Richmond paper among us, inclosing a letter directed to friends at home, in the hope that it might be carried north, should any of us be fortunate enough to be exchanged. By this means, letters containing details of their condition, which were contraband of war, were sometimes smuggled through the lines, without being submitted to the inspection of the gentlemen of the guard, who were thereby relieved of the irksome duty of laboriously spelling out their contents, if indeed, as was not infrequently the case, they had that (to them) dubious accomplishment of reading at all. If the unfortunate officer was detected in thus attempting to evade the prison rules, it was said he was at once placed in confinement on half the usual rations.

To add to our discomfort, our rations were issued at very irregular intervals. Sometimes we were deprived of them entirely for a day, as punishment for the infraction of some rule of the prison authorities, or for the escape of a prisoner. Neither could we forecast within several hours the time of their issuance, when it was made daily. The reason for this latter irregularity was not made known to us, even if we could charitably suppose a reason for it to have existed at all.

The ration, as we here received it, consisted of half a loaf of wheat bread and a small piece of yellow bacon, in which the worms were holding high carnival; and our sharpened appetites never refused the revolting food, but we devoured it with the greed of wolves. We sometimes received beef in place of the bacon. This was issued to us in amounts to last for three days. How our generous commissary supposed we could preserve a three days'

meat ration, never transpired; but *we* solved the problem by devouring it all upon the spot.

It was asserted in a copy of the "Richmond Examiner" which fell into our possession, that seventy-five bullocks were daily slaughtered for the use of the prisoners. This certainly seems an adequate meat ration for the fourteen thousand prisoners claimed to be confined at that time in the various prisons of the city. Allowing two hundred and fifty pounds of meat to each dressed carcass, and that the meat ration was served daily, this would give twenty-one and three-sevenths ounces per diem to each man. As stated above, the beef was issued only once in three days at the most, instead of daily, and making this correction in the newspaper estimate, we should have seven and one-seventh ounces per diem. But this is an overestimate. The writer, previous to entering the service, was accustomed from boyhood to weigh meat in a retail market, and by frequent tests during that time proved himself competent to judge with correctness the weight of a piece of beef, whether in large or small quantity; and he solemnly avers that while in Smith Prison he never received for a three days' meat ration more than two ounces, and his fare was not more stinted than that of his fellow prisoners. The loaves of bread weighed eighteen ounces short. The half of one of these was the allowance for one day. Our daily ration, then, was nine ounces of bread and two-thirds of an ounce of beef, or its equivalent in bacon. This fare, when followed up for weeks and months, was not calculated to produce corpulency among us.

Our first exercise in the morning was the roll-call, which was made under the direction of a brutal fellow named Ross, who had the rank of adjutant, as I remember. He was said to belong to the noble army of renegades, and to hail from New York. After roll-call, we were formed in four ranks, and counted, to make sure that no one had answered for an escaped comrade. If the count and the roll tallied, the exercise was soon over, but if by chance the orderly made a mistake in the count, which he was

quite liable to do (not from any desire to prolong the disagreeable duty, but because of the non-mathematical character of his education), or if any of the men had escaped during the night, we were compelled to stand in line until the whole prison had been searched and all the prisoners had been recounted, a process usually requiring six hours. If the search proved fruitless, and the missing man had really escaped, our rations were cut off for the day to compel us to divulge the manner of the escape—an impartial mode of punishment, affecting the innocent and guilty alike, and quite in character for the testy Dogberrys in authority over us.

Of course we were compelled to practice the closest economy in our food, as well as in the occupancy of the floor. Our four square feet of floor space necessitated the greatest regularity in all our movements. We could not stand without being jostled, sit without being stumbled over, or lie down during the day without being trampled upon. No benches were provided for us to sit upon, and sick and well were alike obliged to sit on the floor with their legs extended, or upon their haunches, at the risk of being pushed over and trodden upon, if the current of prisoners happened to sit in their direction. On retiring for the night, we formed five columns lengthwise of the floor, and at the word of command proceeded to lie down. The room being only forty feet wide, there was an average of four feet allowed as the length of each man. To make up for variations in the "average," we interlaced our legs with those of our opposite, and were packed so closely together that it was impossible to move with any freedom without disturbing our neighbor over the way. When one moved, *all* moved. Those in the same file were obliged to lie on the same side, and when we became tired and desired a change the order was given "to right (or left) over—turn." It was impossible to lie on our backs at all; there was not room enough. We had no blankets to put under or over us. The floor was usually damp, in consequence of the frequent washings we were obliged to give it, there being no heat, either artificial or natural, to



dry it, and thus night brought no cessation and sleep no oblivion to our surroundings. Those who were quartered near the sinks suffered additional torments from the dreadful stench that arose from them. Yet we endured it for thirty-four weary days.

A daily skirmish was kept up with the vermin of the place. In less than a week after our arrival, these parasites made such hostile demonstrations that it required the best of generalship to maintain mastery of the situation. They rallied by squads, companies, and regiments, and charged our lines in whole corps. Nor were they dismayed by the fate of their comrades, but bravely immolated themselves upon the altar of Secessia. We raised the black flag, and spared no captives. By dint of perseverance and unremitting watchfulness we kept their numbers so reduced that none of us was captured, although many were severely wounded. Could the Confederacy have reinforced their armies with the gray back, *genus homo*, as rapidly as its prisons with the gray back, *genus pediculus*, the Yankees would have been overwhelmed in eternal defeat, and the stars and stripes have gone down forever.

The ravages of vermin, filth, and hunger, very soon began to tell upon us; and to tantalize us still further, our thoughts could run upon nothing but food. In our waking moments we moved around in a listless, apathetic, aimless way, apparently seeking unconsciously for something, without a definite idea what it was; and when by a great effort we forced our thoughts to objects foreign to our condition, there was still ever present an undefined feeling of a want that made us peevish, fretful, and abstracted. When we had all retired to our floor for the night, the hours till midnight were spent in picturing the luxurious feasts we should have partaken had we been at home, and many and hot were the contests and quarrels we had over these imaginary repasts. When sleep came at last, our visions ran upon gorgeous banquets and abundant feasts, and we reveled in the plenty that seemed to abound in the land of dreams. And when we awoke to find ourselves



yet in the midst of our old surroundings, the pictures which fancy had painted seemed so real that it required a strong force of will to relieve us from the illusion.

There is no torture so intense as this fierce longing for food. It consumed our strength; we became dizzy-headed; there was a hollow ringing in our ears; our voices became weak and husky; our motions slow, monotonous, and aimless; our eyes glassy; and our faces sallow and sharp, while within, the remorseless vulture gnawed incessantly at our vitals. There was an ever-present and overpowering sense of coming evil, a deep shadow of impending calamity. We could not stand, sit, or lie down with any cessation of this terrible craving, and we were fain to scramble and quarrel over the crumbs that fell from our scanty food upon the dirty floor as hyenas battle over the last morsel of flesh left upon a bone that has been picked.

Our only hope was in release. The exact state of the exchange we did not fully understand, but previous to our capture, we knew that there was some difficulty growing out of the employment of negro troops; and we had been told that until all Federal prisoners, irrespective of color, could be exchanged upon equal terms, the United States had refused to continue the exchange upon the basis of the old cartel. We had faith in the humanity of our government to believe that it would not allow us to suffer if it could honorably prevent it. We also had faith in its *honor* to believe that, once enlisted, under promise of protection, it would insist upon a negro prisoner being treated as well as a white man under similar circumstances. There was, of course, a difference of opinion among the prisoners as to the policy of enlisting the negro in the first instance, but no man caviled at his being protected after he had been accepted as a soldier. We should have felt that we could not trust our rulers at all, if they had left the colored prisoner to the mercies of the enemy, and expended all their care and protection upon us.

We frequently managed to get possession of the Richmond dailies, but they were barren of news of interest to

us. Shut up in this den with nothing to do, nothing to read, we were forming habits the very reverse of the active Yankee character. The impulses to do something to help us forget the miseries of our condition were strong, and in the absence of all other means of employing our time, we organized a debating club, with president and secretary, and made speeches by Confederate gas-light. Our efforts in this direction were, undoubtedly, like the gas—they lacked luminosity in the foul air of the prison. The subjects of discussion were as various as they were numerous. War schemes, plans of campaigns, of attacks upon Richmond, the origin of the war, its probable duration, the status of the seceding states after the war should be ended, foreign and domestic policy, abolition, Jeff Davis (concerning whom there was such unanimity of opinion that the opponent in the debate was obliged to premise that he defended him “for the sake of argument” only), these and many other topics were gravely considered, and, in imitation of the district school lyceum at home, were as gravely decided upon “merits” and “weight of argument.” Many of the wise predictions made in these discussions have since been verified, though most, alas! of those who made them lie beneath the turf of Andersonville.

Occasionally the debates were omitted and lectures and extemporaneous speeches substituted in their place. Mr. John Smith, of the 1st Ohio Volunteer Infantry, gave us a fine off-hand lecture on moral culture, and I had the honor one evening to “define my position” upon the best manner of cultivating bees. Others chose political topics, while others lectured upon matters connected with science and art. But, like all other things in southern prison life, except misery, our intellectual growth was stopped by order of the authorities, and we abandoned these simple “feasts of reason” as we had already abandoned those of a grosser sort. This forced a return to the subject of exchange and the contemplation of our wretchedness. Wherever there was a gathered group, the words “exchange” and “parole” were most in vogue. The first of

November was fixed upon by the sanguine as the extreme limit of our imprisonment, and the guards confirmed the date. The Richmond papers, however, announced that ten thousand of the prisoners were soon to be sent to Lynchburg and Danville, where provisions for our rapidly accumulating numbers were more easily to be obtained. We hesitated to credit this because it looked toward a long winter's confinement, and in that we did not wish to believe.

One day a little episode occurred which for a time relieved the tedium and monotony of our hungry existence. Some of the "boys," in prying into one of the tobacco presses, discovered a box of choice tobacco that had been overlooked in the hurry of evacuating the premises. By loosening a screw and turning back the cover the treasure lay revealed. The news

soon spread through the apartment, and the boys hurried to seize a portion of the coveted weed. They surrounded the box in swarms, and, as in all such cases, their eagerness prevented instead of expediting their gaining



possession. The plugs were compressed so tightly together, and were so dry, that it was impossible to detach them from each other with the fingers alone, and the crush of the "mob" prevented the use of tools. After the scramble had continued for an hour or so with only barren results, a compromise was effected and an orderly sergeant selected to make an equitable division among the men. With the aid of this treasure the fortunate possessors were enabled to buy some extra rations of the guard, and thus for a day or two to secure some remission of the famine which was consuming them.

For the purpose of getting a little additional ventilation we one day opened a door that had been nailed up. Upon this piece of vandalism being discovered, an officious little



stripling came in and ordered the door to be nailed up again. The penalty for disobedience or for a recurrence of the outrage was a confinement upon bread and water for two weeks. He was gravely requested to "bring on his bread and never mind the water." But he didn't bring it. The door was not again disturbed, however, and we saw his face no more.

Two men in our prison managed to trade with the guard for suits of gray clothing, which they put on one evening after dark, and, assuming a *nonchalant* air, announced themselves at the door as members of the police and were allowed to pass out. Whether the ruse was successful and they escaped recapture, we never knew.

In the early part of November, the prisoners confined in the Pemberton building cut a hole through the walls and floor of the prison and opened communication with a cellar, in which a large quantity of commissary supplies, consisting of sugar and salt, had been stored. After dark a detail was made of the prisoners, each of whom repaired to the cellar with a bag or haversack and returned with it well filled. The utmost caution was observed, lest the attention of the guard should be directed to the enterprise. For a number of nights these foraging expeditions were carried on successfully, and so much accumulated upon the hands of the prisoners that they opened a contraband trade with the guard, receiving bread and tobacco in exchange for sugar and salt. The Johnnies knew very well that the prisoners did not come legitimately by these stores, but so long as they could drive a good bargain they did not divulge the secret. The scheme was ultimately discovered by a citizen, but not until, it was said, some thirty-five thousand dollars' worth of the stores had been abstracted. All kinds of rumors were in circulation relative to the punishment to be inflicted upon the perpetrators of the "outrage," among others that all the money taken from the prisoners at Richmond would be confiscated; that enough would be deducted from their rations to make payment; that they would be the very last to be



exchanged, etc., etc. Nothing came of it, however, so far as I knew.

The small-pox broke out among us a few days after our arrival in Richmond. It made its first appearance upon the person of one of our men, who had been infected with it by a Confederate soldier when we passed through Atlanta. It soon spread with great rapidity. We were wholly unacquainted with the symptoms of this disease and did not suspect its nature. In a few days, a dozen or more were taken to the hospital. They never returned, and we knew not whether they recovered or died. It was currently reported and believed among us that the rebels took care that those who were confined in their hospitals should not recover; but this, like many other tales invented or exaggerated by the diseased imaginations of these starving men, was undoubtedly false. It served, however, to inspire a dread of the hospitals, and caused the men to suffer in silence rather than expose themselves to the danger of the sick quarters; for this reason many concealed their sickness until the disease had progressed beyond the chance of recovery. A few pills were occasionally left with the "sergeant of the floor" for distribution to those who cared to take medicine. They were seldom called for, however.

Being debarred from all open communication with the world, we, of course, knew nothing of what was transpiring outside of our prison walls, except when we fell in with a Richmond paper. Those which we obtained upon our arrival, contained, as was natural, most glowing accounts of the brilliant victory of Chickamauga. Some time afterward, mention was made of the "affair" at Missionary Ridge, in which credit was given to the daring generalship of the "Yankee commander." These papers frequently "remarked upon" the treatment of the prisoners, and more than once recommended the entire withdrawal of the meat ration, in order that citizens might obtain it at lower figures in the markets. They were very free and very sarcastic in their observations upon our general appearance. Our unwashed, unkempt, and ragged state was

attributed to the groveling instincts of the Yankee character, and the prison authorities were especially commiserated upon the irksome duties devolved upon them in taking care of us; but never a word was published of the inhuman treatment we suffered at their hands. Any thing was good enough for the "d——d Yank." They rated us as they did the poor whites of "their own Confederacy"—a degree below the negro, and several below their horses and dogs. With their education and their traditions, it is not matter of wonder that they held us in contempt. It has been the characteristic of chivalry in all ages to despise the useful elements of society; and the haughty, idle, thriftless manners of the bastard nobility of foreign countries were the model most affected by these soulless traders in human flesh—too often, alas, of their own blood and parentage.

Just about dawn, on the morning of the 14th of November, we were formed in rank and counted; the bolts were withdrawn from the doors, and we were marched out upon the street. As we passed the door each man was presented with a small loaf of heavy corn bread. Guards were stationed on either side of the street through which we marched to the Danville R. R. bridge. Near here, the head of the column halted for the last of the men to get out of the building, and the ranks to close up. It was rumored among us that we were *en route* for City Point, and we moved forward with alacrity. The knowledge of our true destination did not dawn upon us until we reached the Danville depot. A train of cars was awaiting us, and swallowing our bitter disappointment as we best could, we were quickly aboard, in readiness for another trip through the Confederacy at the public expense. Our train was long and heavy, the engine light, and the grade ascending. In consequence, we were soon stalled, and a messenger sent back to Richmond for help. While waiting here, we could distinctly see the famous Belle Isle prison yard, with its black, ragged tents, and its swarming inmates. This island was at that time used as a place of punishment for Federal prisoners who had been guilty of various

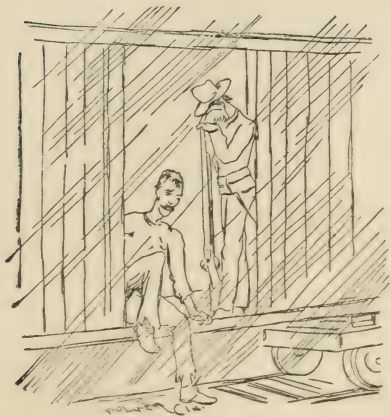
petty offenses, as well as for the unpardonable crime of attempting to escape starvation by running away. A more extended notice of this region of horrors will be given hereafter.

The railroad from Richmond to Danville runs through a gently rolling country, and was then in a fine condition. Petersburg Junction is the largest town on the line, but it is of small importance except as a junction.

Previously to our leaving Richmond, and while rumors were rife that the prisoners were to be quartered either at Lynchburg or Danville, I had constructed, partly from memory and partly from statements obtained from my comrades, a set of maps of the country between Richmond and those two points; one including the rivers between those points and Eastern Tennessee; and a third between those points and Gauley Bridge, with a view, should the opportunity offer, of attempting an escape. It is altogether probable, that these specimens of geographical knowledge and the engraver's art combined, were too liable to error to be safely trusted in a military campaign, but they gave general directions with sufficient accuracy to be useful, especially to one who was not particular whether he came out a hundred miles too far east or west of a given point, so that he struck the right parallel. There seemed to be no Confederate troops stationed along the line of this railroad, and it was evidently considered safe from raids from our cavalry forces. It would have been no very difficult matter to escape from the cars, for the guards were not particularly vigilant, and the train moved very slowly.

Although the distance from Richmond to Danville is only about one hundred and forty miles, and ought to have been made before sundown, the heavy grades and the inadequacy of the engine delayed us so much that at that hour we had traversed only about one-half the distance. At dusk it commenced to rain, and by 8 o'clock it poured down in torrents, and continued until near morning, growing colder and colder meanwhile. When we were within some six miles of Danville, the train

stalled again, and was delayed two or three hours. While the cars were stopping here, I went to the door, and finding the guard half asleep, stepped out upon the ground.




It was very dark, and the storm was still raging violently. I debated with myself some time whether to attempt an escape or not. My first thought was to run for liberty, and I half started to put it into execution; but, upon reflection, I abandoned the project. I was very weak for want of food, was suffering with disease and confinement;

the ground was saturated with rain, the streams swollen, the roads heavy; the winter had just set in, and I had no clothing to protect me except the blouse and pants I wore. The nearest point to our lines was nearly two hundred miles, through an enemy's country. I had but little faith in my maps, and was destitute of a compass, and without this I should have been compelled to inquire my way, which would have been a certain means of detection. Moreover, I had the fear of Belle Isle and Castle Thunder before me. Under the circumstances, it seemed to me better to be discreet than valorous, so I quietly returned to the car. Several of my comrades did attempt to escape, but were all recaptured. We reached Danville on the morning of the 15th of November, having been about twenty-four hours on the road from Richmond.



## CHAPTER XX.

DANVILLE—PRISONS NOS. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6—WRITING LETTERS HOME—OCCUPATION OF TIME—SMALL-POX—RECEIPT OF RATIONS AND CLOTHING BY FLAG OF TRUCE—HOW APPROPRIATED AND ISSUED—HOSPITAL—EXPRESS BOXES—TUNNELING—HANDICRAFT—INCIDENTS—NEWSPAPER REPORTS—EXCHANGE—REMOVAL TO GEORGIA.

ANVILLE is a fine town, situated on the south bank of the Dan river, near the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina, a little north-east of Greensboro, in the latter state. It is a place of some two thousand inhabitants; contains a ladies' seminary, a cotton and woolen factory, a foundry, arsenal, several saw and grist mills, and a large number of fine brick residences. The river closely resembles the James in some important features, being both wide and rapid, and, from the latter circumstance, furnishing excellent water power. It is spanned by a long, covered bridge to accommodate highway travel, and also by a railroad bridge. The country gradually rises into considerable height from the river banks upon either side, and the village stands upon a hill sloping north-eastwardly toward the river. Appearances indicated that, at some previous time, Danville had been a place of considerable business importance, in which the staple product of Virginia constituted the chief article of traffic. A great number of extensive warehouses were here built for the storage and manufacture of tobacco. But with the war business declined, and at the time of our imprisonment, the village presented an appearance of general desolation.

The Richmond papers had announced to us that great preparations had been made at Danville for our re-

ception; but we discovered upon our arrival that, so far from this being true, not even rations were provided. The tobacco warehouses were the only provision visible, and to these we were in due time escorted. One train load of prisoners had been forwarded on the 14th, and were stationed in a large brick warehouse near the foundry and the river, called prison No. 1. Our party was placed in a wooden structure on the opposite side of the street, also a tobacco warehouse, and named prison No. 2. No. 3, a short distance west of No. 2, was next filled, and then Nos. 4 and 5. No. 6 was subsequently occupied by prisoners from No. 2, which was vacated to accommodate the guard, being in a more central position, and consequently of more importance in case of an outbreak. I shall limit myself to an account of the prison in which I was confined; but as in essentials they will not differ materially, a description of one prison will apply equally well to all.

We were marched into prison No. 2 on the morning of November 15, 1863. As soon as the ranks were broken and we were at liberty to wander at will, after selecting my "place" and depositing my bed, which consisted of an old dirty haversack without a crumb in it, near the southwest corner of the second floor, beneath a window, where I might obtain a sufficient supply of air and light, I carefully reconnoitered the "position." The building was found to consist of three full floors and a garret, the latter of considerable importance, as the event proved. Nothing of particular moment, however, developed itself, except the dirt and dust which had accumulated, and the only advantage of this consisted in the fact that until it became trodden down it helped to soften the rigorous hardness of the boards on which we were to sleep. The "establishment" being noted, I next took a survey of the town and surroundings from the window. Upon the north-east the Dan river with its long bridges, the mills situated upon its banks, and their lazy wheels moving monotonously, could be seen. Beyond the stream was a fine cottage, apparently the abode of affluence and happiness, and it was pleasant in the long, lonesome days, to

stand near the window and look out upon that cottage and fancy the comforts and luxuries of its inmates, so strongly contrasted with the dirt and starvation in our midst.

The prison was unfurnished with stoves or fire-places—a deprivation little noticed, however, from the fact that no fuel was given us. We had been promised both fuel and stoves sufficient to warm the rooms, but that part of the programme was not carried out, and it had never been the design to do so, as subsequent events fully proved. A few minutes after the door was closed, while standing on the first floor near a front window which had been boarded up, I overheard two of the rebel commissioned officers, who were slowly passing the spot, conversing upon prison matters, when one of them said to the other: “We now have them where, with the severity of the climate and harsh treatment, nature will do its work faster than the bullet.” This fearful announcement made my blood run cold; but I tried to quiet my apprehensions, by reflecting that these were but subordinate officers, and, like too many of that class, gave utterance to their own feelings, instead of expressing the views of the government under which they held their commissions. The inhuman treatment we afterward received, however, showed that they were quoting the Richmond authorities, whose deliberate plan it was to render such as unfortunately fell into their hands unfit for further service, and to attempt to throw the responsibility therefor upon natural agencies. We had received no food since leaving Smith Prison, two days before, and many of the men were so nearly famished upon drawing their last ration in Richmond that, without considering their future needs, they had devoured it all upon the spot. Two days of total abstinence from food will not affect a well-fed man with any great degree of inconvenience, but to one who has been kept upon less than quarter rations for many weeks, the consequences of a deprivation of all nourishment for forty-eight hours are indescribable. Here we were, however, locked in with bolts and bars, and guarded by rebel bayonets, in a helpless con-

dition, and if they chose to starve us they had the power to do so. About 9 o'clock in the evening, a small, half-baked loaf of what purported to be wheat bread, was given to every two men. To live long on such an allowance was utterly impossible, and rather than die by inches in this most horrible of forms we determined that it would be better to break down the prison doors and rush out upon the guard, even though every man should perish. The choice lay between a short pang and a prolonged agony—the end would be the same. We concluded to defer the desperate project for a few days, hoping that in the meantime our fare would be improved, since suitable preparation might not have been made for our reception, because we arrived upon Sunday, and our numbers were somewhat uncertain. No improvement having taken place for the three days following, on the evening of November 19th, we organized three squads of twenty-five strong men each, to break prison, overpower the small guard, and push with all speed for East Tennessee or Gauley Bridge.

During the day one of the boards of the first floor was removed, and an opening made into the cellar, in which were stored several tobacco presses and some twenty hogsheads of tobacco, and holes were chiseled through the brick partition walls which separated the L's of the building from the main part. The apartments beneath these ells, like those of the main cellar, were used for storing machinery for tobacco manufacture, each of which contained a door opening inward. Between the two L's on the north-east side was a door leading into the street. We removed all the screws from the lock, except one, which was left to hold the door in its place until we were ready to go out. It had been loosened so that no difficulty might be occasioned in its removal after dark. Nine P. M. was the hour appointed for us to be in readiness. Twenty-five men were posted at each of the two front entrances, and twenty-five at the cellar door. I was stationed below with a squad of ten to be in readiness for any emergency. One of the front entrances was a door secured by a cross bar,



and when this was removed the door, being a double one, was readily swung inward; the lock had been removed from the other door, as previously described. The signal for the outbreak was to be the call of the sentinel, "Nine o'clock, and all's well." The break from the three doors was to be made simultaneously, and the six guards seized and secured; when a rush was to be made for the guard-house, a short distance off, and the reserve guard with their arms to be captured. But the man who volunteered to remove the cross-bar, either through carelessness or fright, dropped the bar, making so loud a noise that the sentinels became alarmed, and an additional guard was ordered out, when the idea of escape at that time was considered impracticable, and the project abandoned.

I then thought that it would be impossible successfully to conduct any enterprise requiring secrecy, among a number of mixed prisoners, especially where it involved an extensive plan of operations; since where all entered upon the undertaking voluntarily, no one would have authority to compel each to perform his part, if necessary in spite of all personal risks; and I determined that I would never again engage in any general plan of escape. But I firmly believe, if I had escaped that night, the weather was so favorable for the succeeding two weeks, that I could have reached our lines at Gauley Bridge or in East Tennessee in safety.

On the morning of the 20th, the first prisoner at our detachment died in Danville. He was reduced to a skeleton. His last words were, "Boys, if I only could have something to eat, I could live."

For a few days after this, our bread rations improved slightly and beef was added to the mess, but like every thing rebellious, it was "too good to last." We soon returned to our scanty and ill-cooked food. Incredible as it may appear, I have divided among sixteen men a piece of meat containing not more than eight cubic inches for a day's ration. Such a piece would not weigh more than half a pound. Our wheat bread lasted for a short time, when a kind of black, bitter stuff, made of what was called

Richmond middlings, was substituted. This was so badly baked and so sour that it made many of the prisoners ill, inducing dysentery and nausea. Our appetites sharpened with the scantiness of the fare, and we were fortunate if we could catch a rat for food. A hogshead of old wheat bran was found in the cellar and greedily devoured by the famishing men. Such was the liberality of a people fighting for sacred rights, as they call them, toward prisoners taken in a war which they claim to have conducted purely upon Christian principles!

In addition to these discomforts, we were compelled to avoid all near approach to the windows by the recklessness of the guard outside the prison, who, upon the appearance of a man at them, fired recklessly into the building. Our windows were riddled by the balls thus fired at us, and the beams and timbers of the several apartments filled with them. This piece of tyranny was uncalled for and unnecessary, for no one, in his senses, would have had the temerity to attempt escape through a window, in daylight and in full view of the guard. One poor fellow in number five opened a window in the upper room and thrust his head out to breathe a little fresh air after his confinement during the night in the close apartment, and not hearing the warning of the guard to draw back, was fired upon and instantly killed, being shot through the head. Very few casualties occurred from this firing, the "boys," when they perceived the sentinels making ready to fire, calling out "lie down," when all would fall upon the floor and the balls passed harmlessly over their heads.

About this time, a new roll of our names was made, after which we were searched and our case knives, pocket knives, spoons, scissors, watches, gold and silver rings—every thing in short that could be found possessing any value, except our clothes—were taken from us. Many of the watches were hidden in the ceiling, previous to the search, and saved. Some saved a few greenbacks by rolling them tightly and placing them in the bowls of their pipes, and covering them with tobacco, which was then

lighted. Others packed their bills in their blouse buttons, which they opened for the purpose. But the rebels could not rob us of much money after we had been once searched. The "Yanks" were generally sharp enough for them, so far as they had tools to work with. Had we known that our case knives and spoons were to be taken from us, we could have secreted them also; but we supposed that they were safe from "confiscation," otherwise how could we be expected to be able to cut and prepare our meat ration? We were completely out-generaled in this respect here. But it seemed from what followed that their plan was too deep for our penetration; for after this, the quantity of meat served to each man was so small that no knife was necessary to cut it into proper dimensions for eating—a strategic point in economy we were not able then to foresee.

Soon after this, permission was given us to send letters to our friends by flag of truce. Many improved the opportunity to send for boxes of provisions, while some, distrusting the Confederate authorities, preferred that their friends at the North should keep their "good things," rather than that they should fall into our enemy's hands. It was, however, some satisfaction to be permitted to correspond with our friends, even though we could only describe our health in the briefest possible manner.

Being deprived of our conveniencies for eating, necessity, the reputed mother of invention, soon called out the ingenuity of the Yankee mind. Before the officials discovered it, we had torn in pieces the tobacco presses and the hogsheads, using the bolts, sheet-iron and tin of the former for hammers, punches, saws, cups, pails and plates, while seats and fire-wood were made of the staves of the latter. It was too late to rectify the evil when the authorities discovered what we had been doing; they, therefore, made the best of a bad matter and let us go on. The sound of clinking iron could be heard from early morn till sunset, in manufacturing the various articles which the boys busied themselves about.

'The old practice of "skirmishing," which had been car-



ried on at Richmond, soon had to be incorporated with the daily tactics at this place. The water we used came from the Dan river, in small quantities, such as could be brought in pails by a detail, which performed its duties as often as they were permitted by the guard, but in insufficient quantities for any but drinking purposes. In consequence our clothes were unwashed. My own, which were a fair sample of the rest, were not cleansed for one hundred and fifty days, because I could procure neither soap nor water to wash them with; and even if we could have washed, we had no fires by which to dry them, and no change to put on while they could dry in the air—the sun did not shine in prison No. 2—and if we once wet them, there was no alternative but to dry them upon our persons. This process would have been uncomfortable and dangerous, in a December atmosphere, in a room without fires. The Richmond papers seemed to make a jest of our filthy condition, and the moral which they drew from our *personnel* was, “the naturally groveling tendency of the Yankee race.”

About this time the small-pox broke out. But little notice was at first taken of the fact by the authorities, and I have known as many as eighteen patients lying helpless upon the filth and dirt of the bare prison floor, without medicine, without food, without blankets, till their flesh dropped in decayed lumps from their bodies; while no effort was made to remove them, or alleviate their sufferings. And all this time the other prisoners were in constant contact with them, sleeping side by side with them, and inhaling the vile stench of this loathsome disease. In consequence, all who could be infected were more or less severely attacked, while many who had been vaccinated were brought down with varioloid. About the first of January, I was promoted to the position of hospital attendant, and had charge to some extent of the sick and medicines of our prison. A small-pox hospital was meanwhile established, and a detail of men who had had the disease was made to nurse the sick. By giving strict attention to each case as fast as it appeared, and removing



the infected at once to the hospital, the disease was finally suppressed, and did not make its appearance again in our prison after the 5th of January, although it was still raging in the others. This was the only contagious disease among the prisoners to which our diet was favorable. We received no fat meat and no salt, and in these two particulars our treatment by the rebels was highly sanitary, whether it was by design or accident.

While on the train from Richmond, I read in a paper of the 14th of November that fourteen tons of clothing and rations had been received at City Point by flag of truce, from the U. S. Sanitary Commission, for distribution among the prisoners. The clothing, it was stated, consisted of 12,000 complete uniforms, which would be distributed immediately. It was now the 1st of December, and the weather was extremely cold. We had no blankets, and our clothing was thin and nearly worn out. We all looked forward to the issue of our thick, comfortable, *clean* clothes with the greatest eagerness, although our ardor was somewhat dampened by the foreboding that the supply of new clothes intimated a distant day of exchange. Yet we could not quite make up our minds that we were to be left in our present condition, and hoped at least that our government would force an early exchange. The authorities trifled away three precious weeks, after the clothing was received by them, before any of it was issued—three long, anxious weeks to us who were nightly chilled in our fireless pen. There were at this time some 4,200 prisoners at Danville—prisons Nos. 3, 4 and 5 having been filled. There was, as had been intended, an entire new suit for each man; and if these had been properly distributed, there would still have been enough left to clothe the entire guard set over us. But without waiting to issue to us our share first, the guard proceeded to help themselves; and some time before any thing was given to us, the rebel soldiers were seen wearing the great-coats, pants and shoes intended for the prisoners, either with or without the complicity of the rebel authorities; but certainly with their knowledge, for no attempt was made to conceal the

fact. Among the number of our guard were several who had participated in the mob attack upon our soldiers as they passed through Baltimore in April, 1861, apparently selected as our overseers on account of their known infamous character; and these were the first to set the example of plunder from the sanitary stores. Richie, Brady, and one or two others, will long be remembered by those who suffered under their barbarous treatment during that fearful winter of 1863-4. The clothing was issued to our prison on the 24th of December, but without any reference to the necessities of the recipients, for many who already had passable clothes received full suits, while others whose uniforms were in tatters obtained only partial ones in their place. It is not too much to say that out of the 12,000 full suits sent to us, not over one-half of the 4,200 prisoners obtained one complete; the balance receiving one or two pieces, according to the whim of the distributing officer. We were extremely grateful for what we did get, however.

In the afternoon of this day, the occupants of prison No. 2 were transferred to No. 6. This prison was a tobacco warehouse, one hundred feet long by forty wide, containing four full floors, built of brick and not very pleasantly situated, being further back from the river than the other prisons. Here each of us received our Christmas dinner, which consisted of eight small pieces of hard bread per man, besides the usual rations of black bread and beef. On one other occasion we received a ration of hard bread, some mess pork, and white beans, and this was all we ever received of the three hundred thousand rations reported to have been sent to us by flag of truce. Of the presence of sugar, coffee, kraut, and vinegar, we had no ocular demonstration. The other prison received about the same quantity, and those returned from the hospital reported a similar state of things there. What became of the balance is not definitely known. The presumption is that none of it was allowed to spoil.

As soon as the clothing was distributed, a sutler was sent into the prisons with rice, salt, and tobacco, to barter

for the prisoners' clothing. The table of prices he employed in the exchange of his goods was as follows :

<i>Articles (new).</i>	<i>Gov't Price.</i>	<i>Sutler's Price.</i>
Pants.....	\$4 60.....	15 pounds rice.
Blouse.....	3 00.....	3 " "
Overcoat.....	10 00.....	20 " "
Blanket.....	3 70.....	18 " "

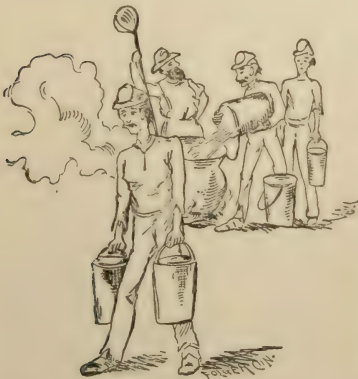
Taking advantage of our necessities, this army vampire succeeded in wheedling their new clothing away from some of the thoughtless and imprudent prisoners, who preferred gratifying their present cravings to providing for future comforts. They were, without doubt, induced to exchange their clothing for food by the prospect of a speedy release, a hope too often disappointed to be indulged in by any but the most sanguine. Through this want of foresight, many a brave fellow now lies in a prisoner's grave who, by saving his clothing, might have saved his life ; for subsequent exposure to sun and storm at Andersonville bent many an unprotected form in death. I believe I am safe in stating that two-thirds of the clothing and rations sent us from the North found its way ultimately into the hands of the Confederate authorities, either by direct stealing or through the agency of their sutlers.

In each of the prisons a steward was appointed, whose duty it was to inspect every room daily, and make a list of the sick who required medical treatment, at the same time ascertaining as nearly as possible the nature of the disease. The next morning, he reported the list to the surgeon, bringing out to the door of the prison for examination those whose disorder he could not determine, and receiving medicines to be given to those who remained. If, upon examination, any were found too ill to be returned to the prison, they were placed in an army wagon, which accompanied the surgeon for the purpose, and conveyed to the hospital. The hospital barracks were situated upon an eminence south of the town. They were constructed for the use of the prisoners, were warmed by stoves, and contained



good bunks for sleeping upon. When the sick arrived, they received as good treatment as could be expected under the circumstances. Clean clothes, plenty of water and soap for bathing, were furnished, and their food consisted of light wheat bread, with a hash made of Irish or sweet potatoes and beef. Their rations were cooked by prisoners detailed for the purpose. Upon the whole, the authorities seemed to do all they could for the sick, and every one appeared satisfied with the attention bestowed upon them. It is pleasant to look back upon this, the almost only bright spot in the gloom of the fourteen weary months I spent in their hands.

About this time, we received an addition of soup to our daily rations of black bread. This was prepared under the supervision of a rebel sergeant called Irish Pete. The cook-house over which he presided was located in a little wing on the north side of prison No. 1. The establishment contained four large potash kettles, of about two barrels capacity. The soup was made by boiling black cow peas or musty rice in a liquor of meat, with sometimes, though seldom, a little cabbage thrown in. The prisoners were divided into messes of from sixteen to twenty each. One man from each of these messes went, under guard, to the cook-house, with two pails, for the soup.



When all the soup carriers had collected before the kettles, they were marched to the river, where each one was required to fill his pails with water, after which he was marshaled back to the cook-house. The first man in the line was then required to pour the freezing water into one of the kettles, whereupon his then empty pails were filled with the com-

pound, when he fell back a few steps. The next man then went through the same process, and thus the rations



were served out through the whole line. The quality of the last mess was decidedly thin, after undergoing so many dilutions; and there is no doubt that the addition of some eighty pailfuls of cold river water detracted somewhat from its flavor. The four original kettles served for four thousand men; or, two barrels of water, flavored with a decoction of buggy black peas or musty rice, constituted a good part of one day's rations for one thousand hungry men. Truly, here was fine-pointed economy.

About the latter part of January, the boys began to receive replies to the letters they had sent to their friends, and soon after came the boxes of "good things." These boxes were first taken to the commissary rooms, where they were subjected to search, lest any thing contraband of prison regulations might be concealed in them. This was a proper and necessary precaution, but, unfortunately, the authorities, after taking all the articles from the boxes and examining them critically, omitted to put back such trifling matters as the tea, coffee, sugar, canned fruit, and clothing, which they contained; an oversight for which, if there had been any efficacy in prisoner's oaths of condemnation, they would have been sent to fraternize with certain other rebels—of whom mention is made in Holy Writ. We were required to receipt for every thing the boxes originally contained, and these receipts were returned to the authorities at Washington; and thus, conclusive evidence was filed of the strict performance of their duty by the Confederates. By this means, they possessed themselves of the receipts for our boxes and their contents also; a shrewd piece of diplomacy, and a kind in which these lovers of freedom, the "nigger and the last ditch" have excelled for many years. They began by borrowing money and repudiating their debts; is it any wonder that they should sink to the profound meanness of robbing prisoners of war of the little gifts of friends, designed to alleviate their wretchedness, and encourage their hopefulness, by the knowledge that they were remembered at home. Nearly all the boxes sent us, were examined and

delivered in this manner, except those that were not delivered at all.

Petitions had frequently been sent to the officer in command of the prisons to furnish us with firewood, but they were disregarded, and we were forced to remain in our cold apartments, during the months of February and March, with no fire except on two or three occasions. In each of these months, a load of tough oak wood was hauled us, in logs ten or twelve feet long. For a long time no axes were furnished us with which to cut it into proper dimensions for burning, and we had no saws. It is presumed that the rebels supposed us to have iron fingers and muscles to pull the logs in pieces with. Our mother wit came to our aid here, as on many other occasions. From the iron bolts of the tobacco presses, we manufactured wedges with which, and a great deal of perseverance, we succeeded in working up the wood into fine splinters. By means of a piece of plate iron, boiler thickness, we constructed a fire-place, by simply laying the iron, which was a follower in a press, upon bricks, to prevent burning the floor; while for a chimney we had the whole room. Of course, when our fires were burning, we suffered from the smoke, but the heat was comfortable. The effect of so much smoke was to create sore eyes, and we were finally obliged to abandon the project of artificial heat altogether, and to return to the simpler method of forming a column of two ranks and marching about the room until the old building shook again; after which exercise, we would lie down as snugly as possible and try to sleep, renewing the exercise whenever, during the night, we became too cold to lie down longer. This performance was attended with only one disadvantage; it increased the demands of nature upon the commissary, and heightened the cravings of the hunger already famishing us.

The early part of February brought us encouraging news of a speedy release. The Richmond papers announced a special exchange already made, and predicted a return at once to the old cartel. This was the first exchange that had been made since our capture, and we clung to this

forlorn plank—the only one we had upon which to place a hope of salvation—with the tenacity of a drowning man. But about the middle of the month news of a contrary character came. The papers told us that “Beast Butler” had been appointed commissioner of exchange, with plenary powers, and that, in consequence of this appointment, the plan was virtually abandoned, for the Confederate authorities would never consent to treat with the “Brute.” Bombastic threats of horrible treatment of the Federal prisoners were made unless he were removed; they were to be shipped to the scorching climate of Southern Georgia, where, amid the marshes and swamps of that low country, the heat and miasma would accomplish the fatal work faster than the bullet at the front; that the United States government would find itself mistaken, if it thought it could force them to exchange a negro for a white man; and that how much soever they loved their friends, who were pining in the military dungeons of the North, they would let them rot there before they would submit to the dictations of the “Beast.” The article closed by stating that it was now a question of time as to which government would soonest yield, with much more to the same effect. The news filled us with the deepest gloom, for we came to the conclusion that if our government had fixed upon a course of policy, it would “fight it out on that line,” even if we were all sacrificed.

The date of our release was now entirely beyond conjecture, and we made up our minds that the only way left to escape death was to escape from prison. All our thoughts were turned in this direction, and every method which ingenuity could suggest was immediately canvassed, and its merits duly weighed. On the evening of the 15th of January, a young man, named Williamson, had made good his escape from No. 6, by climbing down the high board fence that inclosed the prison yard, the cross pieces of which formed a kind of ladder on the outside. As he reached the ground, he was challenged by the guard, but, by a few vigorous leaps, he was soon out of sight in the darkness. The guard exploded a cap at



him, but by good fortune his piece was not discharged. His less fortunate companion, however, was captured as soon as he reached the ground. This success encouraged us to follow the example, and nearly every day a man was missing at roll call; the secrecy and adroitness with which these escapes were effected baffled every effort of the authorities to discover the means that were adopted in making them. They even nailed two inch planks to within a few inches of the tops of the windows of the first, second, and third floors, in their anxiety to prevent the boys from getting away from them.

At the time of the escape of the officers from the Libby, at Richmond, a tunnel was being dug under Prison No. 5, which was subsequently completed, and some seventy made their escape through it, nearly all of whom reached our lines in safety. In digging these tunnels, many precautions were necessary, as our prisons were frequently examined, and unfortunately we had among us some men who, for an extra ration, would divulge the secret to the guards. The whole enterprise, therefore, was known to but few. Another precaution was necessary in disposing of the earth removed, so as to leave no trace of it in sight. A corner of the prison was selected, where a board was removed from the floor, so that the operators could pass up and down without attracting observation. Case knives, which had been secreted at the time of the grand search, and escaped "confiscation," were used for picks, and half canteens for shovels; these, together with small boxes for conveying away the earth, constituted the implements for these engineering enterprises. The loose earth was thrown back under the floors between the sleepers and cross-pieces. The "hole" was dug of the proper size, a little inclined until so deep (generally four or six feet below the surface) that the thickness of the earth might be sufficiently strong to support any burden that might cross it in the street above. It was then carried far enough horizontally to pass beyond the guard line and into some street or field convenient for escape. The tunnels were of various sizes, according to the diligence



and perseverance of the operators. That dug by the prisoners of No. 4 was wide and deep enough for two men to walk abreast in it. Prisons No. 3, 4, and 6 had begun similar tunnels at about the same time. Those of 3 and 6 were nearly completed, and that of 4 entirely so. The prisoners were waiting for a favorable night for escape, when some traitor in No. 6 reported to the authorities, and they immediately put an end to further proceedings in that direction. The discovery in No. 6 led to the immediate examination of the other prisons, when all were disclosed. The prisoners were driven from the first floor at once (it was midnight when they made examination), and a guard was put at the stairway. A general hauling up of the first floors ensued, and the whole of our mining operations exposed. The discovery of these excavations created no little excitement in Danville; the papers gave them the name of "Morgan tunnels," claiming that we had borrowed the idea from General Morgan, who had recently escaped from the Ohio Penitentiary. They gave us credit for being very industrious and persevering, and counseled the closest watching over the "Yankees." But, in spite of all their precautions, men daily made their escape. One way in which this was effected was as follows: The wells in the prison yards became dry, and it was necessary for a detail to go, under guard, for water to the river, some twenty rods distant; in going to which we had to pass over a stone culvert. If, by straggling behind, or slipping suddenly to one side, one of the "boys" could evade the guard, he concealed himself in this culvert until night, when he went on his way rejoicing. A very few, who had money, bought their way out through the guards. These guards were the North Carolina militia, and many of them would have been good Union men, if they had dared. They often expressed to me their abhorrence of the treatment we suffered, and would have done something to alleviate our distress, but were so closely watched by military detectives that they were compelled to be very cautious both in what they did and said. They frequently asserted a lack of faith in their

ability to gain their independence, and many declared that they could not enjoy a greater degree of liberty, even if the "Confederacy" should be established, than they had always enjoyed under the old flag. The boxes we had received by express contained Cincinnati papers, which we were at a little pains to distribute among them, and they read with surprise the accounts of the prosperity of northern cities, for they had not been accustomed to see any papers but their own, which, of course, contained nothing favorable to our side.

One of the worst enemies we had to contend with was idleness. To persons who have been all their lives accustomed to active labor, there can be nothing more wearisome than continual inaction. We had no physical exercise, and nothing to read. The little stock of stories—tales of our experience in our several campaigns, and eventful or humorous incidents in our lives—was soon exhausted. Nothing new transpired to attract our attention and furnish food for conversation and thought from day to day; for each day's events were but a recurrence of those of the preceding, and the time dragged itself monotonously along. This monotony at length became more horrible than our imprisonment, and it often seemed that death would be a welcome change, so utterly exhausted were we with this prostrating ennui. I would infinitely rather have been confined in the Ohio penitentiary for the same offense, where I could have been occupied, than have remained in the situation I was placed in. Many of the prisoners were excellent mechanics; in fact, representatives of all classes of society were among us; and under the influence of the monotony of our life, the ingenuity of each class began to develop itself. It has before been stated, that we had many kinds of tools for various purposes. A more particular account of the methods adopted in constructing these tools may not be uninteresting. Our "raw material" was the old tobacco presses which were found in the cellar. We made saws of sheet iron, bolts, and case knives. The teeth of the saws were cut with cold chisels that were hammered out of bolts, and

were then hardened to a proper degree by heating and cooling. Drills were made of sewing and darning needles that had escaped confiscation. An upright wooden shaft was first fastened securely upon the top of the needle. Upon this, and at right angles to it, heavy arms were attached, to act as a kind of balance wheel. The drill was put in motion by means of a bar, through which the shaft was passed in such a manner that it moved freely in a vertical direction. To the ends of this bar a string was tied, and fastened firmly to the top of the axis, about which it then was coiled. The operator then, by pressing down upon the bar, uncoiled the string, at the same time causing the drill to revolve. When the string was all uncoiled, sufficient momentum was imparted to the instrument to cause it to rewind in the opposite direction. By alternately bearing down and raising the bar, the drill was kept in constant motion as long as the operator might desire. Files were constructed of bolts by means of the cold chisel; and, although the tools were made in a primitive manner, they were finished quite nicely, and were certainly very serviceable. These, with bits of glass, the pocket knives that had been secreted at the time of the search, and bricks used for polishing, constituted our chest of tools; and the articles that were fashioned with their aid were really very curious and very highly finished. No prisoner, after his experience in southern prisons, can ever doubt the veracity of Robinson Crusoe's narrative.

With trinkets that we had manufactured, we bought of the guard an article called laurel root. It is the root of a shrub that grows upon high places in various parts of the South, and when dried becomes very hard and susceptible of a high polish. The bones of the beef which was given us for rations, and which were carefully preserved, together with the laurel, formed the stock out of which were manufactured a great variety of articles.

Every man now turned "tinker," and continued his labors as long as we remained in Danville. In passing from prison No. 6 to the soup-house, the noise in the other



prisons reminded one of the busy hum of an extensive machine shop, so constant and untiring were the labors of those within. A person inside could not be heard unless he spoke at the top of his voice, and the loud shouts, mingled with the click of hammers and the buzzing of saws, made up a Babel of discordant sounds. Of the articles manufactured, the majority were finger-rings, books, shirt studs, needles, toothpicks, spoons, buttons, pipes, and pocket-knives, together with a great number of things engraved with war scenes and their mementoes. The pocket-knives were made entirely of bone, except the rivets. The laurel pipes were ingeniously and laboriously carved, and many of the designs were extremely intricate, requiring weeks for their completion. Time was of secondary importance, and the more of it that could be spent upon one article, the better pleased the mechanic would be. Many a pipe was made that was very valuable as a work of art. The figures were all wrought in relief, and many of them, representing human faces, dogs, buildings, battle scenes, etc., exhibited marked features of artistic skill.

After the men were all driven from the first story, some eight hundred were crowded together on the three uppermost floors, in each building. This was packing us pretty closely, but thus cramped we remained until sent away from Danville to the south. To add to our sufferings only six out of these eight hundred were allowed to pass below at one time. Those who desired to go were obliged to form in line and wait their turn, and he who was so unfortunate, either by accident, or from those crowding behind, as to step over the line in front, was immediately fired upon by the guard. Several were killed or maimed in this manner, and a window at the top of the staircase was completely riddled with bullets, fired at these innocent offenders. The filth and stench arising from our rooms, pent up as we were like cattle, with no means of egress, and more than half of us sick with that scourge of the soldier—the chronic diarrhea—were beyond description. The order for this worse than brutal treatment



came from Major Moffit, a deserter from our regular army, who had command of the post at Danville. If but one-half of the enormities practiced upon helpless prisoners, under his orders, could be told with decency, the vile odors of those Danville stables, where we were kept, would be fragrance to the stench of his memory.

In prison No. 6 was nearly a whole company of the 35th Indiana Infantry. They were bold, rough, determined, dare-devil fellows, whom nothing could daunt or discourage. Fuel not being furnished us, they began tearing up the garret floor for firewood. A guard came up and ordered them to desist, under penalty of terrible punishment. The floor remained unmolested until one morning, just after the rations had been issued, the boys, being out of wood, commenced another raid upon it. The boards cracked and flew in splinters in every direction; the guards of the prison, hearing the noise, called the lieutenant, who immediately ran up the stairs and ordered them to stop. But his orders were ineffectual to stay the work of destruction; every board of the floor was torn up and broken in pieces. When this was done the stairs leading to the garret were pulled down and in like manner destroyed. After the work had been finished, which it required but a few minutes to do, about twenty-five of the guard came up, with bayonets fixed. They trembled with rage, for there was visible on the faces of the prisoners a determination to avenge any violent act upon themselves. But not even an arrest was made; the guard was marched back again, and the men, each with his trophy piled up at the head of his sleeping place, left to enjoy their victory unmolested. But the victory was not won. About ten o'clock, "Irish Pete" and the commissary brought the meat ration to the prison and ordered the sergeant of the prison to divide it only among those who had had no part in despoiling the garret floor. The tidings of this proposed division soon reached the Indiana boys, and they at once made a claim for their share, which the sergeant could not do otherwise than refuse to grant them. Thereupon they seized the pails of

meat, which had been divided into parts for the different rooms, and upsetting them, each laid hold of a portion of their contents and hurried to his quarters. "Irish Pete" and the long, lean commissary, immediately followed them up the stairs, with their hickory canes, to recapture the spoils. Reaching the third floor, the "men in authority" at once identified the "thieves," as they in their indignation termed them, by the pieces of meat still in their hands; whereupon "Pete" commenced to belabor one of them over the shoulders with his "shillalah." A young Irishman, named Carter, seeing his "erring brother" thus exercising his favorite method of correction, immediately called out: "Boys, that won't do,



let's go for 'em." In an instant the whole "floor" rallied with such weapons as first came to hand. They failed in cutting off the enemy's retreat down the stairway, but charging in the rear, they pursued them with oaths, bolts, and brickbats, down the first flight

of stairs, across the room to the next flight, where they halted. The retreating foe sprang wildly down the last stairs, their coat-tails bearing horizontally, and their staring eyes hanging out of their heads, exclaiming, "Where's the kay! Where's the kay! Open the door! Open the door!" at the top of their voices. Having about ten feet the start, they made good their retreat, escaping with two or three slight bruises. It was lucky for "Irish Pete" that his retreat was not cut off, for had he been caught the enraged boys would undoubtedly have killed him on the spot. He had made himself unpopular among the prisoners by several times striking them with his "schtick," and no one would have interfered to save him being torn piecemeal. No punishment followed this daring act; on the contrary, it seemed to have a good effect

upon Major Moffit, for he immediately promoted Carter to the office of sergeant of the prison, and for some time afterward our supplies of wood for cooking were both frequent and in sufficient quantities, and an ax with which to cut it was furnished us.

Near the last of March another plan of escape was formed. News from Richmond gave accounts of Kilpatrick's raid upon that city, and hundreds of citizens flocked into Danville to secure a safe retreat in case the city should be captured. This news encouraged us to hope that if we could once break through the guard at Danville we could reach the lines of Kilpatrick's force, which was reported as striking toward the railroads between us and Richmond. By means of prisoners on parole at the cook-house, we were able to communicate with the different prisons, and thus to arrange the details of a plan for a general escape. In spite of all precautions prison No. 5 had constructed another tunnel, by opening their floor into an unoccupied room on the first story, and seventy men had escaped. This caused closer watching over us, and so careful did the scrutiny become that it was next to impossible for any one to escape by the ordinary means. The plan was, therefore, a desperate one, and involved no less than a release of all the prisoners in Danville, with the seizure of the railroads and telegraphs. Each prison was to organize itself in companies of sixty men each, with proper officers, and these companies formed into two battalions, whose officers in like manner were to be elected. This organization, if completed, would form an effective force of some four thousand men—a truly formidable array, if properly officered and reduced to discipline. The expected attack upon Richmond had caused a withdrawal of a large part of the prison guards, which never had been very strong, so that only a feeble resistance to us was apprehended at first. When all should be organized, at a favorable moment a chosen body was to rush upon the three guards in each prison, seize and secure their arms, then to burst open the doors and windows, and overpower the street



guards before they could reload, after the first discharge of their pieces. Meantime, a large force was to proceed to the central guard-house, attack and capture it—a thing easily done with a slight loss of life; No. 6 was to make an onset upon the arsenal and try to capture it, with its contents, which consisted of large quantities of small arms with ammunition and a battery of artillery. The suddenness of the attack, and the total want of preparation on the part of the guard, were thought sufficient to insure success. The plot was undoubtedly feasible from its desperate character; no commander would have been able to foresee and make preparation against so daring an act. But the most difficult part was yet to be performed. Telegraph communication could at once be made with Richmond, and all places along our intended route where troops were stationed. Having control of the railroads, the rebel government, upon receipt of news of our escape, could forward a brigade of well armed troops to head off and recapture us. It was true that we could cut the wires at Danville, and take possession of the railroad at that point, but this would only have given us a few hours longer respite, for couriers would have been sent to the nearest telegraph station long before we could have intercepted them. In any event, if we had succeeded in getting a day's march ahead of our pursuers, how were we to subsist so large a force without a commissary department, in an enemy's country, and with no officers of experience or authority to compel obedience and direct our march? There were nine chances for failure to one for success in the enterprise. Yet, desperate as it was, it was firmly resolved upon, and several of the prisons had perfected their organization, when unexpected news from Richmond, and subsequent events, put an end to the scheme.

On the 12th of April, a daily paper, just from a Richmond press, was brought into the prison by Old Charley, who called the daily roll, containing intelligence so gratifying to him, that, after roll-call, he read it aloud for our information. The article intended for our ears, com-



menced, in heavy capitals: "GLORIOUS NEWS. THE OLD CARTEL TO BE RESUMED." It then proceeded to announce to the southern people, that their friends who were "pinning away in northern dungeons," were soon to be released; that all Federal prisoners were to be exchanged; that a heavy burden of expense would soon be lifted from their shoulders, and a general exchange effected upon a basis highly satisfactory and honorable to all parties, etc.

On hearing these glad tidings, every one was on tip-toe with delight; our hearts beat high with hope: the joy of the prisoners exceeded all bounds. We danced, shouted, sung at the top of our voices, making the old warehouses tremble with our jubilees. Danville prisoners were to be released as soon as those in Richmond had been disposed of, and we were assured that the paroling and exchanging at that place were far on toward completion. Many were so certain of speedy release, that they even bought, for various articles of manufacture, and sometimes for money, their "first chance" for City Point. No. 5 prisoners were to be forwarded first, and No. 6 next, the others in such order as should be agreed upon.

On the morning of the 13th April, No. 5 left for Richmond; our turn would come the next day. That one day "dragged its slow length along," so tardily that it seemed almost an eternity. Our impatience would burst the bounds of time and hasten the lazy hours apace. The morning of the 14th came at length, with orders to us to be ready to march to the depot. After receiving three days' rations—a liberal supply for a journey to City Point—we were marshaled to the cars. Our apprehensions, excited by the liberality of the commissary, were quieted with the information that a recent freshet had carried off the bridges between Danville and Richmond, and that the James was so swollen and filled with drift-wood that the flag of truce boat experienced great difficulty in ascending that river. As the train started, we raised one loud shout of joy—our farewell to the late scene of our sufferings—little thinking that to this lowest depth of misery, the Confederate authorities could find a lower still. The

fresh, pure air filled our lungs once more, and sent the hot blood glowing through our veins; and we felt that we were soon to stand again beneath the starry emblem of our national liberty, free men. By ten o'clock we reached the Staunton river, the bridge over which had been swept away; but, by making a detour of half a mile, we found an old log bridge, over which we crossed in safety. On the opposite side stood a train of cars, awaiting our arrival, aboard which we were soon placed, and hastened on our way in the direction of Richmond. We reached the Petersburg junction of the South Side Railroad just at sundown, and were still sixty miles from the end of our journey. While stopping here to change cars, a citizen informed us that we were fortunate in being so far advanced, as this train load was all that was now to be exchanged, for new difficulties had arisen and exchange was to be stopped immediately. But the train proceeding on, cut short our conversation with him, and we ceased to think of what he had told us, or this intelligence would have increased the misgivings excited by our three days' rations. We arrived at Petersburg about four o'clock in the morning, where we were again unloaded to change cars, for the last time, as we supposed, before reaching City Point. Marching along the streets, we instantly recognized the various buildings we had passed on our route to the south in October. Here our misgivings were again aroused, for we knew that City Point did not lie in the direction we were moving; and something of our true destination flashed upon our minds. Arriving at the depot, we found a train of cars awaiting us. The locomotive had not been brought out, and it became a matter of deepest interest to us to which end of the train it would be attached; if to the north end, we were all right, and a speedy exchange, with home and friends, awaited us; if to the south end, we knew not what might be in store. The engine soon came puffing from a southern direction, was coupled to the cars at the south end of the train, and we started. How eagerly we watched the road for a curve to the north-east, each holding his breath in the anxious sus-

pense with which we looked through the crevices in the cars, for a favorable turn in our affairs. The train kept straight on, turning neither right nor left, bearing almost due south. Slowly and gloomily we allowed the conviction to settle upon our minds that we were now bound for the long-threatened swamps of Georgia, there, amid the heat and miasma, to die. A few tried to console themselves with the thought that Congress, knowing our sufferings so well, would make every effort for our exchange, and that Savannah was the point toward which we were moving, for that purpose. Many murmured at the seeming indifference to our fate, thus exhibited by our government; but, with our limited knowledge of the reasons for such a course, we could come to no conclusion, other than that a sacrifice was demanded for some purpose, and we were the designated victims.

During the afternoon we reached Gaston, where we exchanged both guard and cars, and proceeded toward Raleigh. Arriving within four miles of that place shortly after dark, we halted and camped in the woods for the night. A train was backed down to us from Raleigh early next morning, and we commenced our journey for the far-famed Andersonville prison-pen.

Little of interest transpired on our trip to the South, except the insignificant accident of three of the cars being thrown from the track and completely wrecked, doing damage to no one, however. Our route lay through Raleigh, Charlotte, Columbia, Augusta, and Macon. These towns bore the same dilapidated appearance, exhibited the same quiet, grass-grown streets, the same lazy, listless air, which characterizes so many cities of the South. At Augusta, a prisoner, having by some means procured a rebel uniform, put it on, and while walking around among us was ordered away. Complying with the order, he stepped aside, and, falling in with a regiment that was going to Atlanta, he joined it, and commenced his "trip" to the North. He was, however, betrayed by a man who informed him that a ferry, which he wished to cross, was unguarded; on reaching which,

he found that the statement was false, and he was re-taken and sent to Andersonville. He afterward effected his escape from that place by passing through the gates as a sick man, and was never *re-taken*.

The train rolled slowly on, reaching Macon at daylight, where we halted for a couple of hours, waiting for the road in our front to be cleared of trains, which were coming up from the South. From the cars, we had a near view of the extensive iron works located at this place; and, for a time, nearly forgot the fact that we were prisoners, while watching the workmen as they plied their busy craft. Here were old locomotives, placed *hors de combat* in some disaster, waiting to have broken arms dis-jointed and new ones put in their place. Scattered over the ground and lying about in confused heaps, were pieces of iron guns that had burst, old rails, bar and pig iron, brought here to be wrought into articles of service. The train finally moved on in a south-west direction, past the Confederate States Chemical Laboratory, wherein most of the medicines were manufactured for their army, reaching Andersonville Station, sixty-five miles distant, about noon of the 20th of April, 1864, where we halted and disembarked.



## CHAPTER XXI.

ANDERSONVILLE - PRISON—ADMITTED—APPEARANCE OF THE PRISONERS AND THE PEN—THE FIRST NIGHT—THE MORNING—SEARCH FOR WATER—ROLL-CALL—RATIONS—COOKING UTENSILS—WOOD AND AXES—BELLE ISLAND—PRISONERS FROM CAHABA AND PLYMOUTH.



AS SOON as we had been removed from the cars, we were placed in charge of Captain Wirz, the commandant of the prison, who rode up and ordered us all to form into four ranks; he then passed along the line dividing the whole column into detachments of two hundred and seventy men each; these detachments were then subdivided into three divisions of ninety men, and three sergeants appointed to take charge of them. This process required about two hours in the performance, and while we were waiting, standing in the broiling sun, we took a bird's eye view of our future place of confinement. The cars had halted upon a gentle knoll, sloping southwardly to a swampy creek, and in a northern direction for a short distance, leaving us upon a semi-circular ridge, from which we had a good view of the surrounding country. About half a mile in our front, as we faced the east, we descried the "buildings" which were to constitute our abode, and which consisted of what appeared to be a fence of logs set upright in the ground, inclosing a long, narrow area. On our way we had been told that here we were to be furnished with comfortable houses, both numerous and roomy, in which there would be no more crowding together, as at Richmond and Danville; and that as much liberty would be allowed us, as was compatible with security against our escape. We, therefore, strained our eyes to catch a glimpse of those "comfortable houses,"

and not seeing them, concluded they must be so low as to be invisible outside the inclosure, and that the fence was the limit of the yard in which we were to take the "plenty of exercise" promised us. Beyond the prison and stretching out on all sides of us, was a vast forest of pine, whose heavy dark foliage, hanging above the tall and limbless trunks, seemed like a funeral canopy spread over the gloomy scene. A little to our right was a small, sluggish stream,\* bending slightly to the north, and terminating in a narrow, marshy belt, just as it reached the prison walls; this we presumed was to supply us with water. Near the walls of the prison, on the north side of the stream, stood a building in process of construction, the skeleton of the roof being all that was visible. The whole presented an appearance of desolation, which can be felt only by those who witnessed it.

The preliminaries being finally settled to the satisfaction of the commandant, the column moved forward upon the main road until it reached the vicinity of the stream, where it separated into two nearly equal parts, the advance continuing directly forward to the main entrance of the yard, while the rear turned to the right and crossed the stream, entering by the south gate. The detachment to which I belonged was in the van, and when we reached the gate we halted; the guard, with loaded muskets and with bayonets fixed, was drawn up in line of battle; the massive double doors swung open, disclosing a horrible and heart-rending spectacle. The prisoners had gathered in a disorderly crowd upon either side of the main street, opposite to the entrance, to receive us, and to recognize any acquaintances or friends that might be in our company; their faces and hands and naked feet were black with smoke from the pine fires; their clothing hung in tattered strips from their limbs and bodies; their hair, long and matted with tar and dirt, fell in ropes over their eyes, which glared fearfully upon us as we marched between these living walls. It was like entering the borders

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\* See p. 238.

of hell, where the gathered demons had crowded to the passage to bid us welcome to their infernal abodes. These men, who had been heroes upon many a well contested field, were now shorn of their strength, and stood helpless beside us; their black skin drawn tight upon their fleshless frames, their bony arms trembling with weakness. Some were without hats, some without coats or shirts; others had no pants, and nearly all were destitute of any covering for the feet. They more resembled fiends than human beings; to such a fearful pass had the brutality of their jailors brought them. From this moment hope forsook us; we felt that this was, indeed, "the last of earth;" that we had been brought here into dreary forests and swamps, far from home, and beyond the reach of friends, to die. True foreboding, alas! to how many of us!

The prison\* at Andersonville is a roofless inclosure, containing, at the time of our arrival, some fifteen and one-half acres in area, it being about sixty rods in length by forty in width. The site was selected by Captain Winder, a son of General John H. Winder, who was sent from Richmond for that purpose, some time in the latter part of December, 1863. It is located upon both sides of the little creek (it had become a swamp at this point), which we had noted while standing at the railroad station, sloping gradually down to it from both sides. The walls of the stockade were of pitch pine timbers, hewn about twelve inches in thickness, and as wide as the trees from which they were cut would admit. The timbers were about twenty feet long; they had been set in a trench some five feet in depth, and around them the earth had been packed, holding them firmly in position. It was said to have been built under the superintendence of Captain Winder, who had impressed a sufficient number of negroes for the purpose, and was a fine specimen of stockade architecture. At intervals of about a hundred feet, sentry boxes were constructed, six feet in length by four in

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\* See plan, p. 238.

width, and of such height that when the sentry stood erect the top of the wall was on a level with his breast; they were reached from the outside by long ladders, and were covered with boards for shelter against the sun and storms.\*

Within the inclosure, fifteen to eighteen feet from it, was a railing some four feet in height, running parallel with the prison walls; it was formed by nailing scantling upon posts driven at regular intervals into the ground. This constituted the mark between life and death—the limit of the prisoners' ramble—the dead line.† Any man, sick or well, sane or demented, found on the inside of that line, was fired upon without a word of warning, and, if the aim of the guard was good, shot dead. Many a time, as the author afterward saw, the guard fired and missed their mark, hitting and killing men peaceably walking about in the area, far from the dead line—so carelessly and recklessly did they discharge their muskets among the prisoners. On one occasion, a "sergeant of division," doing duty in bringing the sick to the place for examination by the surgeon, was pushed beyond this line by the crowd behind him; the guard fired without warning, and the ball passed completely through both arms and his body: he lived about two hours after this. It was currently reported that for every Yankee shot, the fortunate sentinel received a furlough of thirty days.

Scattered about in various parts of the area were the "houses" of the prisoners; these consisted of pieces of shelter tents, or remnants of blankets, stretched upon boughs of pine trees; but few of the prisoners possessed these accommodations, and the majority were either with no covering at all, or had dug holes in the ground, into which they crawled for shelter. In looking over this field, there could be seen nothing of interest to attract the eye or engage the attention of the beholder. Turn in which way we would, the same dismal scene of wretchedness confronted us; the same squalid forms crawled past; the

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\* See illustration, opp. p. 147.

† See illustration, opp. p. 257.



same sullen look of despair was on every face. Around us were the high, gray walls, upon whose top stood the relentless sentry, ready and eager to destroy us at the first motion beyond the limit fixed; the gloomy pines, upon whose dark tops the blue smoke of our pit had settled down in ominous clouds, stretched far off on every hand; it was only when we looked upward to the sky that we saw faint rays of light in the mild blue eye of heaven beaming benignly down upon us; there, from the presence of the God above us, we gathered new strength, new inspiration, well knowing that only by keeping our hearts strong, and our courage true, could we survive the terrible scenes that must shortly follow.

In the north-east and south-east corners were spaces about eight rods in length by four in width, in which white canvas was stretched, in the form of wedges, with the sharp edge uppermost; the tops of these contrivances were about five feet high, while the bottoms were fastened to wooden pins some six inches from the ground; the floor was the bare earth, uncarpeted with grass or straw. These constituted the "hospitals" of Camp Sumter, and were excellently designed for the purpose of baking the unfortunate victims of disease who might chance to crawl into them. Destructive as these ovens were, they were crowded with sick men, who lay moaning upon the naked bed, sweltering in the glowing heat of the southern sun, which, even at this time of the year, was pouring down torrents of fire.

The only unoccupied space in the inclosure north of the swamp was a narrow strip fifty feet wide, reaching quite across the east side of the pen, from north to south. Into this we were ushered in due form, and turned loose to shift for ourselves. In this confined space we were permitted to select our position, and the right to it, when selected, was based upon the principle of squatter sovereignty; if the unfortunate occupant of the soil, however, was too weak to maintain his right, he was subject to be ousted at any time by his stronger neighbor. Generally, each detachment had a portion of soil assigned by the au-

thorities, as we afterward learned, where it was required to "locate" for purposes of roll-call, sick-call, and the issuing of rations; but the men were not obliged to remain there at any other time, or for any other purposes.

Having been admitted to this den, with but little trouble on our part, we threw down our "traps," and waited for further developments. In the army it had been the custom for two congenial spirits to put their few articles of food, their blankets, and cooking utensils, together, forming a partnership concern, from which both derived equal benefit. My "partner" and I tried to do something of this kind here, but the scheme was mostly a failure, for the common stock did not extend beyond a couple of dirty haversacks, a piece of tin which we had "gobbled" from the top of one of the cars that had been wrecked on our trip, two tin cups, and a couple of pieces of dirty blanket which had survived the winter at Danville. By a piece of good luck, we had halted near a stump, about four or five inches high, and, as soon as we were permitted to break ranks, we stepped upon it, and proclaimed our possession. Here was our home, and having laid our worldly goods upon it, we gravely sat down to consider what next was to be done.

Our last rations had been issued at Augusta, and consisted of a *pone* and a small piece of shoulder bacon. The *pone* proper was a mixture of corn meal, salt, and water, baked in the form of a roll twisted to a point at both ends, and weighing about a pound, although, at Andersonville, any irregular piece of corn bread was known by that name. We had already fasted for thirty-six hours, and traveled more than two hundred miles, but were told, upon inquiry from the older prisoners, that we should draw no rations until the next day. It was now about the middle of the afternoon; the scorching sun was burning and blistering us, unaccustomed as we had been to exposure to its rays in the warehouses at Danville; we knew that our fate was in our own hands; that if we became despondent, and gave way to the horrors of our situation,

we should inevitably grow sick, and sickness and death were synonymous.

Nothing but discouragement met us at every turn; we were not even safe from the depredations of the prisoners themselves. We were cautioned particularly against the "raiders," a class of depredators with which every army abounds, and of which no military prison is ever free, who, under cover of darkness, were wont to search the camp, and steal such few useful articles as they could take unobserved from their fellows. We were assured that we must keep the strictest guard over our effects at all times, or the raiders would get them, and we be left destitute; the prison authorities furnished us material, which we were expected to cook, if we did not wish to eat it raw; but our cooking utensils must be such as our own ingenuity could devise, for nothing of the kind was ever issued.

Too tired, with our long journey, to venture out and explore our prison, in minute detail, we threw ourselves upon the ground, and waited patiently for the darkness to shut the miserable scene from our sight. The sun went down at last; the prisoners sought their beds; and silence, broken only by the feverish moan of some dying sufferer, as he rolled upon the earth, which was soon to open and receive him into his bosom; the "all's well" of the sentry, as he called the hour to his fellows; or the occasional cry of the "raiders," settled down upon the camp. The dismal strangeness of the scene banished slumber from our eyes, and thoughts of our situation came strong and rapid upon us. If we had been sentenced to die at the stake upon the coming morrow, we could not have been more gloomy and despairing. Until now, we had not believed that the government we had voluntarily joined in protecting could abandon us, after faithful service, to the tender mercies of our enraged and barbarous enemies. But it was the 20th of April; we had passed six months amid the horrors of Richmond and Danville, and we were now brought here, a thousand miles beyond the reach or



hope of succor, into a region of wilderness and swamps—sick, starving, naked—to die. A few square feet of earth were ours, sacred to our use and our cherishing care; over us was the canopy of heaven, the roof of our mansion; our couch was the cold, damp soil; our earthly possessions were at our feet; there was no day of exchange to look forward to—nothing to hope for. We had left the world behind when we entered this spot; the great gate had swung into its place, and shut us in, how many of us, forever. We dared not look forward, for a contemplation of the future was too appalling; we had fallen into a deep gulf, where our own kind, fallen before us, had changed into hideous specters that threatened to torture and destroy us. And thus the first long night at Andersonville passed away.

Morning broke at last, and, rising from the couch on which we had in vain sought repose, we rolled together our blankets, wet with the chilling shower of dew which had fallen copiously during the night, and fastening our cooking utensils to the bundle, left them with a friend, while we set out in search of water. Taking the direction of a belt of fog, which had settled down about half way between our situation and the south end of the stockade, we found, on reaching it, a black, boggy swamp, that appeared to be about eighty yards in width, through the center of which flowed a muddy stream of water, winding its sluggish way along, till it passed between the timbers of the stockade, slightly scored off for the purpose, on the east side. The swamp contained about three acres of land, or nearly one-fifth the territory assigned us; along the borders of the stream, and extending back to to either edge of the morass, were frequent bogs, in which the stagnant water, oozing up through the loose earth, had formed in little pools, and was covered with a thick, dark scum, which gave out a sickening stench when it was disturbed. At its eastern extremity, where the water made its exit, the prison sinks were located; although, from the weakness of the sick men, the lower part of the stream,



for the distance of several rods, was used for this purpose.\* The water was warm and disagreeable; it had a boggy, earthy taste, and was, in its purest state, of a dark, reddish brown color; yet, if all the arrangements for our imprisonment had been as good as this, we should never have murmured. On the west side, near the dead line, was a bridge of loose boards, over which communication could be had with the opposite side of the swamp. Above this, a place had been scooped out directly beneath the dead line, where water for drinking and cooking purposes was dipped up in cups: below, the water was reserved for bathing and washing clothes, these arrangements, how-



ever, had been made by common consent of the prisoners, the authorities having nothing to do with it; there was nothing to prevent the evil-disposed from disturbing the water, and rendering it unfit for use, except the moral influence of camp.

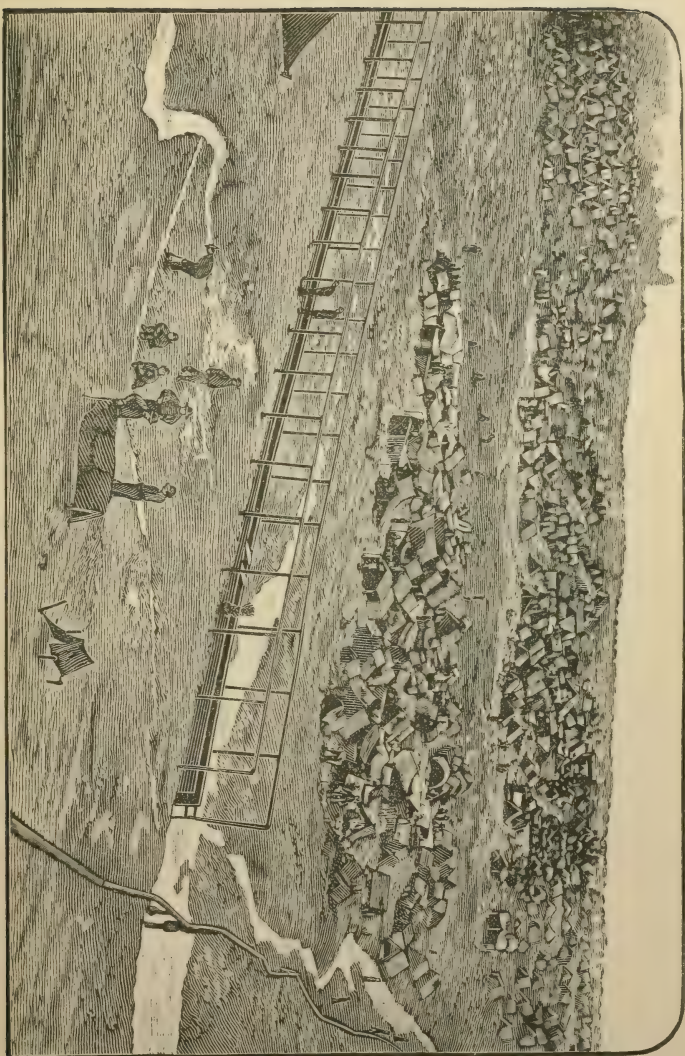
Having bathed our hands and faces, we returned to our "lodging," just as the men were lighting their little cook-fires preparatory to the morning meal. Having nothing to cook, we sat down upon our stump and waited, looking hungrily on, until the brief repast of the others had terminated. At eight o'clock came the roll-call. For this purpose, the drum beat the assembly at the south gate, and the men formed in four ranks, by divisions and detachments, to be counted. Sergeants had been appointed to take charge of their respective divisions, to receive and distribute rations; to superintend the men in foraging for wood outside the stockade; to form them in column for roll-call, and to attend to such other business of a public nature as occasion might require. The "roll-call man" was usually a Confederate non-commissioned officer, who

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\* See p. 238.

had charge of several detachments, which were counted in regular order. He was accompanied through each division by its sergeant, and counted the men by fours. If the division was full, the time employed at roll-call was brief; but if one man was missing, the sergeant was called upon to report what had become of him; when, if he could be found, the division was reported full, and at once broke ranks, going wherever the men pleased. It was only when a man was missed and could not be found, that the roll-call became an oppression. On the morning after such an event was discovered, all the prisoners were placed in four ranks, and required to stand in their places, in the hot sun, until every man in the stockade could be counted; a process requiring about six hours for its completion. By this means, any one out of his place in the ranks could be found, if he were still in the stockade; but if he had escaped, and no trace of him was discovered, the entire division to which he belonged was put upon two-thirds the usual meat ration, unless some of its members would divulge the manner in which the escape had been made; which punishment was continued according to the whim of the commandant, or until the man was re-caught. The sergeant of division was required to report every absentee to the "roll-call man," as soon as he came upon the ground; if he neglected to do this, he was subjected to punishment in the standing stocks for twenty-four or forty-eight hours, after which a ball and chain was attached to his leg, and he was turned loose into the stockade again. Occasionally, a man who made his escape arranged with a friend, who belonged to another division than himself, to fill his place for a short time, until he could get far enough away to avoid recapture; this would be done by the friend taking his place in his own division until it had been counted, when he would quietly slip into the division of the other man, thus making it full. The deception was ultimately discovered, of course, but generally not until the runaway was beyond pursuit. To prevent the divisions breaking ranks while the long search

NORTH-WEST VIEW OF ANDERSONVILLE







continued, the sentinels were trebled in the sentry-boxes, with orders to fire into the first squad that attempted it.

Some time in the afternoon after our arrival, the ration wagon drove into the stockade, laden with corn meal, bacon, and salt, which were thrown down into a heap, in an open space about midway the inclosure. It was a horrible sight to witness the haggard crowd gathered about this precious pile, while the commissary superintended its division



among the squad sergeants, gazing meanwhile with wolfish eyes upon the little heap as it diminished, or following their sergeant commissary back to his quarters, as famished swine follow clamorously the footsteps of their master, as he carries their food to the accustomed trough. The rations were distributed by the division-sergeant to the mess-sergeant, who then divided them among the men. To avoid quarreling during the last distribution, it was the custom among all the messes for the mess-sergeant to separate the rations into as many small parcels as there were men in the mess. One man of the mess was placed a short distance off, with his back toward the parcels, in such position that he could not see them. The mess-sergeant then pointed to one, with the words, "Who has this?" to which the man replied, announcing the name of the recipient, when it was given to him. In this manner, the whole number was gone through with, with satisfaction to all.

Iron bake pans, like those used by the Confederate soldiers, had been issued to the prisoners who first arrived at this place, in which to bake their meal and fry their bacon; but nothing of the kind was ever given out afterward, to my knowledge. The United States soldiers, as is well known, were never provided with other cooking utensils than mess kettles and mess pans, both too large

to be transported in any other way than upon army wagons. At the time of our capture, in numerous instances, the tin cups and plates which we had were taken from us. Our knives, it will be remembered, were confiscated at Danville. Nothing, therefore, was left in our possession with which to cook our raw food after it was given us. How to accomplish this necessary feat was a grave question. We made shift, however, with chips, half canteens, tin cups, that had escaped confiscation, and pieces of sheet iron, to bake one side of the stuff, while the other was scarcely warmed through. The solder of the tin, melting and mingling with the bread, added another to our almost innumerable hardships. But with all our care and labor, the rations were at last devoured in a half-cooked state—a fact which aided to increase the frightful misery which subsequently occurred, quite as much as the small quantity that was issued. A more extended account of the quantity as well as the quality of our food will be given hereafter.

A few tops of the pine trees which had been left within the stockade by the Confederate authorities when the interior was cleared, together with the greater part of the stumps, had been used by the first detachments, and an adequate supply of wood was never afterward provided, although just outside of the prison walls millions of tons, apparently worthless in that country, were growing, and we would have gladly gathered it and brought it in upon our shoulders, if we had been allowed to do so. While I remained within the stockade, such permission was not granted, except for a few times, when a squad from each division was sent under guard to forage for dead limbs and sticks; the practice being brought to an end by one of the "details" seizing the guard and marching northward with him. After this circumstance, Captain Wirz devised a kind of parole or obligation, which the boys accepted before going out, wherein they agreed to make no attempt at escape while foraging; but even this was not respected, and the plan was dropped in a short time. During all the time in which the men were allowed to go

out of the stockade, any one with sufficient money or other valuables was permitted to hire a guard, if he could find one unemployed and willing to be hired, and with him to go into the woods to gather up such dead wood and loose twigs as were lying upon the ground. No axes or any tools for cutting wood were ever furnished by the authorities, except a few issued when the first prisoners were confined there. Some of the boys, however, had bought axes of the sentinels, who had purloined them from the quartermaster of their regiment; and after wood was brought into the prison by the commissary, the owner of these tools often made an extra fuel ration by loaning them to those who had no other means of cutting it. The quantity of this wood was extremely small, so small indeed that I hesitate to make an estimate of it, lest I should be disbelieved; but it is safe to assert that no more than one-fourth of a cord was ever given to a detachment for one day. This, divided equally among two hundred and seventy men, would give to each a little less than one-ninth of a foot; or, to reduce it still farther, it was equal to a green pine plank two inches in thickness, twelve inches long, by eight wide. This was the maximum; the minimum was no wood at all, which was frequently the case. This wood was drawn to us in various conditions, being mostly the tops of trees that had been felled to obtain the stockade timbers. It consisted of large and small sticks, varying from a foot to an inch in diameter, and from two to twenty feet in length. To reduce this to proper dimensions required the aid of tools, and these consisted principally of iron spikes, which had been picked up upon the railroad while the boys were being transported hither, and wooden wedges, which had been whittled out with jack-knives. With these implements, we could reduce the wood to splinters of sufficient dimensions for cooking purposes; but it required the closest economy in the using. Little holes were dug in the earth, in which the fires were built; and over these our tins, if we had them, were hung, in which we heated water for scalding our meal preparatory to baking it; and



at the same time, toasting our morsel of bacon, to economize the heat.

It becomes necessary to introduce at this point a brief account of the treatment experienced by the prisoners at Belle Island, previous to their being brought to Andersonville, in order that a full appreciation may be had of the misery endured by them at the latter place, as well as to account for the frightful mortality which subsequently occurred among them; although the tale is presented at second hand, it was told the author by a relative, in whose narrative full confidence can be placed, corroborated, as it was, by the statements of hundreds of living witnesses, with whom the writer subsequently conversed.

One day, soon after our arrival, as I was returning from the creek, I saw a young man before me, whom I thought I recognized. Approaching and calling him by name, he responded, and here, indeed, was a cousin whom I had not seen for several years; but so changed was he that it was only by his peculiar gait that I remembered him at all. Cold and starvation had reduced the bluff, hearty man of one hundred and sixty pounds to a meager skeleton that I could easily raise in my arms.

He was captured soon after the battle of Gettysburg, while on a scouting expedition (he belonged to the cavalry branch of the service), and taken to Belle Island, in the James river, above the railroad bridges at Richmond. The river at this point is nearly half a mile in width, and quite deep, and the chilly north-west winds sweep pitilessly down from the neighboring mountains across this cheerless spot. The island contained a large rolling mill, but at that time was otherwise unprovided with shelter or inclosure; batteries of artillery were planted upon the surrounding hills, in position to throw shell or canister into the camp, at the least appearance of disorder among the prisoners. The first ten detachments, some three thousand men in all, arrived in February and the early part of March, to inaugurate the Andersonville prison, from the prisons of Richmond and Belle Isle.



Those who had been upon the island had suffered during the fall upon that desolate spot, without proper clothing, shelterless, and with no fire wood, save what was furnished in scanty measure for cooking purposes. The daily allowance of food was so meager that, pinched by hunger and want, they caught rats, and devoured them with greed. One day, a dog belonging to the roll-call sergeant followed him to the island, and the prisoners, by a little "engineering," caught, killed, and ate a portion of him. The dog being missed, he was inquired for, and his whereabouts ascertained; when the man who killed the brute was sought and found, and for punishment, was ordered to eat the remainder raw, but the fact coming to the knowledge of an officer of the guard, the order was countermanded after a portion had been eaten. But my informant told me the punishment would have been gladly shared by every man on the island. This story getting abroad among the northern papers by some means, the Richmond editors came out with what they denominated the "facts in the case," namely: that the prisoners did kill a dog, and, having dressed it, offered it for sale as rabbit meat; and out of this circumstance originated the dog-meat story; but they did not mention the punishment inflicted for killing the animal. When the cold weather came, a few tents were provided, but they were totally inadequate to the wants of the men. Furnaces were constructed in these tents, and chimneys carried up outside, built of gravel and sand, in order to economize the heat of the scanty fuel. The chimneys retaining their heat imparted a welcome warmth to the men who were destitute of blankets, and they gathered closely around, hugging them with their freezing limbs. The number of the destitute was so great that all could not do this, and the rest packed themselves together in ditches and low places, striving thus to keep alive the vital spark, by cherishing it in common. After living through this frost and famine, surviving the treatment which was inflicted upon them at Belle Isle, they had been brought to Georgia to be further experimented upon. The cold was less dis-

astrous in its effects than the sun, because by exercise the blood could be kept sufficiently warm to continue in circulation; but, under the fervid heat of the summer sun, they were powerless to save themselves. Occasionally, one had a piece of ragged blanket which he stretched upon sticks and sought shelter beneath its protection; but by far the greater portion had not even a hat to shield the head at noonday. The nights, too, were chilly and oftentimes frosty; and even two or three blankets were hardly sufficient to secure warmth. And thus, by alternate melting and freezing, with an occasional rain through which to pass the day and night, and with constant starvation, is it any wonder that these men died daily by scores? Is it not rather a wonder that any of them survived so long as they did?

In the early part of May, some five hundred Tennesseans, who had been captured by Forrest, and wintered at Selma and Cahawba, Alabama, arrived among us; the most of whom were hatless, bootless, and shoeless, without coats, pants, and blankets. On leaving those places, the authorities had told them that they were going to be exchanged—a shrewd piece of “strategy” with which rebel officers duped the unsuspecting prisoners, upon all occasions of removal, to avoid increasing the number of the guard that accompanied them. They were wholly destitute of cups, plates, spoons, and dishes of every kind, as well as of all means of purchasing them: they having been stripped of these things by their captors. In their destitute condition they were turned into the stockade and left to shift for themselves in the best manner they could. To borrow cups of their fellow-prisoners was an impossibility, for no one could be expected to lend what, if it were not returned, would insure his own destruction, particularly when the borrower was an utter stranger; there was nothing left for them but to bake their raw meal and bacon upon stones and chips, eat it without moisture, and afterward to go to the brook like beasts to quench their thirst. To keep themselves from the cold during the night they scooped out shallow places in the earth with their hands, and lying

down side by side in these, with their bare heads and naked feet resting upon the surface of the ground, and their unprotected bodies wet with dews and storms, the wretched men trembled and shivered till morning. There was no hope of bettering their condition, for, having no money, they could buy nothing; nothing would be given by their fellows or by the authorities; they could do nothing by which to earn even worn out apparel; they were utterly helpless to benefit themselves; and yet these men were kept here for many months and lived.

Soon afterward came two thousand more, who had been recently captured at Plymouth, N. C. These men came to Andersonville with better provisions than any that had before arrived. By the terms of surrender, they were allowed to retain their money, knapsacks, and extra clothing, together with certain articles pertaining to culinary uses. These "things" were private property, bought and paid for by each man, and by all law and decency should have been preserved to him without stipulation; but such was not generally the case. It was a matter of the greatest surprise to us that the rebel authorities respected these terms after they had been made with them, yet by some oversight doubtless on their part they were respected; but they knew full well that such articles as could be of use to their army would just as surely find their way ultimately in their possession, for trifling returns, as if they had taken them by force. A few days before the capture of these men, they had been enlisted as veterans, and received pay as such. Each man had, consequently, quite a large amount of money—some as many as three hundred dollars—and nearly every one had an overcoat, extra pants, shirts, drawers, and blankets. It was pleasant to look upon them, to see their noble forms arrayed in the comfortable uniforms of our loved country; but, while we were glad to





find them so well provided with materials for their comfort, we were by no means rejoiced to see them among us, for we knew too well by our own experience that their present good cheer could not last. They were, as a general thing, noble-minded and intelligent, with a high sense of honor and integrity; men whose associations had evidently been of the best character; they had enlisted and periled their lives because they felt it to be their duty. It was sad to think how soon they would be brought low, their courage gone, and squalid want and misery claim them for their victims. They brought us some news about exchange, and like all prisoners who had been but recently captured, indulged in flattering anticipations of speedy release; and being animated by this hope, they spent their money freely, buying such things of the older prisoners as they could induce them to part with, and paying exorbitant prices therefor. Like all new prisoners who had had no previous experience in the kind of life we were leading they were horror-stricken with our appearance; but they attributed it entirely to our indolent habits, for they could not believe that men professing to be Christians could be so totally devoid of humanity as to reduce the helpless beings in their power to such a terrible condition of wretchedness. They accordingly charged us with being the cause of our dirty appearance, and jeered at us when we told them we were powerless to prevent or improve it. We, knowing full well that they would soon learn the true state of affairs, forebore to reply to their taunts.

In a brief time they had wasted their money, and, when it was gone, they could endure the climate and the fare no better than we. As soon as the soap they had brought with them was exhausted, their appearance was no cleaner than ours. The pine smoke penetrated their skin, as it had done ours, and ground itself into their flesh; frequent and copious ablutions would not remove it from them; the soft soap they received once in three or four weeks whitened their skins or cleansed their hands no more than it did ours; and their clothing rapidly became filthy and worn;



in a few weeks they mingled undistinguishably with their fellows. They soon began to decline under the horrible treatment, and in a short time hundreds of them were placed in the grave. The money they put in circulation doubtless saved many a man's life, for it often fell into the hands of those who, after an experience of eight months of prison life, knew how to economize their little funds. The thousands of dollars spent by them, while they added to the comforts of others, proved of brief advantage to themselves, and in the end they were the means of hastening their unhappy fate; for they could not easily assimilate to the habits of the other prisoners, and died before they could become inured to the climate and fare of the prison. I believe I state the truth in saying that, before that fatal summer was past, two in three of those two thousand strong, robust, healthy men, that came among us, flushed with spirit and hope, slept their last sleep in the prisoners' grave at Andersonville and Millen.

## CHAPTER XXII.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE STOCKADE—THE CAMP AT DAYLIGHT—SHELTERS—COOKING—APPEARANCE OF THE PRISONERS—ROLL-CALL—SICK-CALL—MARKET—THE SUTLER—SMUGGLERS—MANUFACTURERS—GAMBLERS—WATER—FORTIFYING—"RAIDERS"—SIX MEN HUNG—POLICE—PETITIONS—WRITING LETTERS—RECEIVING EXPRESS BOXES—INCIDENTS—A STORM AND BREAK IN THE STOCKADE—THE SPRING.



IN the preceding chapter an attempt has been made to introduce the reader to the stockade, and to relate the extent of the preparations made for our maintenance there by the officers having charge of the prison; in the present, it will be the author's aim to show the methods adopted by the prisoners themselves to subsist upon the scanty means afforded them, together with other matters pertaining to the stockade itself. The next chapter will show some of the results of our treatment.

In the early part of the month of June, the number of the prisoners had increased to nearly twenty thousand men. These were crowded into an area containing less than eleven acres, after deducting the spaces included in the swamp and dead line; and a further allowance being made for the various streets and paths, there will be left to each man a plat containing twenty-four square feet, or six feet in length by four in width. As the number was almost daily increasing, under an order from the War Department, at Richmond, that all the prisoners east of the Mississippi should be concentrated at this point, it became necessary to enlarge the dimensions of the stockade. It had been proposed to the prisoners to do this some time in the latter part of May, but they had refused to comply with the request, preferring to remain in their crowded

state to aiding their enemies in any manner, fearing, among other things, that such an act would be construed to their disadvantage by their own government; they also hoped that the rebels, knowing this objection to taking part in the work, would enlarge the inclosure for humanity's sake; how far the humanity of the rebels could be confided in will be amply illustrated during the progress of this narrative. Finding, however, that their numbers were constantly increasing, and General Winder's order to Captain Wirz "to pile in the d——d lazy vagabonds three deep, if they held out longer," being reported to them, they finally consented to perform the labor.

Some thirty men were selected for the purpose, each of whom gave a verbal parole to make no attempt to escape while on this duty; they were then provided with axes and spades, and set to work. The enlargement was made upon the north end of the old stockade, and extended some forty rods in length; and, if this estimate be correct, the addition would include some ten acres of land. The whole work was concluded about the 1st of July, having continued two weeks.

When all was completed, a few feet of the old wall, which was still standing between the two portions of the the pen, was taken down, making an opening ten or twelve feet in width, through which the living tide soon began to pour its filthy current. The number of detachments at this time was ninety, one-half of which, from the forty-fifth upward, was to be transferred to the new ground. At ten o'clock the moving commenced, and it continued until the sun had long gone down. More than ten thousand men passed through the narrow opening, all eager to rush in and inspect their new quarters. The crowd was so great that the sick, falling down in the press, were trodden upon and killed; strong men became wedged in between the moving mass and the standing timbers, and were crushed; men carrying all their earthly goods, wretched though they were, yet precious to them, dropped a little cup, or a piece of ragged blanket, and, stooping to pick it up or preserve it, were overthrown, trampled upon

by the hurrying feet that could not turn aside, and left a shapeless, hideous mass of broken limbs bathed in blood. How many were thus killed outright is not known, but a large number, both of the strong and weak, were so injured that they never recovered. It is painful to contemplate this miserable scene, which a little foresight might have prevented. Had the officers of the prison taken the charge of the removal in hand, as they were bound in virtue of their office to do, the frightful tragedy would never have occurred, and many a man, who dated, from the fatigue and the injuries received upon that day, the disease which terminated in the grave, might have survived to be finally exchanged. Had the Confederate authorities ordered the detachments through the opening one by one, assigning to each its place in the new ground as it entered, the whole might have moved harmoniously, and the work would have been completed in a few hours at most, without hurry, confusion, or disaster.

The whole area now occupied by the prisoners included about twenty-five acres, and was spacious enough for all necessary purposes. The tops of the few trees which had been cut down within the new inclosure were left upon the ground, and the partition wall torn away by the men for their own use; for a time there was much improvement among us, but, when the wood was gone which had thus been furnished, and the constant trampling of feet had beaten down the grass, the new stockade became like the old one, and the inmates of each undistinguishable.

The better to understand and appreciate the horrors of the situation in which we were placed, I will take the liberty to introduce the reader into the interior of the stockade, and point out to him the daily routine of the place, together with the appearance of its inmates. Let him not shrink from the terrible sight; for here he will witness how a noble spirit can overcome the weakness of the body with its strength; how the brave heart battles with the slow, steady, but certain approach of the dreaded foe, who conquers all at last; and will learn a lesson of patient endurance, of calm, yet fearful suffering, of sublime courage,



that will raise his faith in humanity, and arouse his deepest sympathies with men that can suffer all this, buoyed up and sustained by an ardent love for that country upon whose altar they offer themselves a sacrifice.

We obtain our passes from Captain Wirz, and present them at the south gate, where they are examined by the officer in charge of it, who pronounces them all right and turns us over to the sergeant, with orders for our admission; he, thereupon, opens a little wicket and we enter. Passing hurriedly down the wagon road, we cross the dead line, without halting, lest the sentry may mistake us for prisoners and fire upon us, where we come to a halt and take a brief survey of the scene. It is early morning, and the first gray streaks of dawn are lighting up the sky; but the bright rays of the sun, itself still below the horizon, seem to pass far over our heads, as if to avoid a contact with the loathsome objects around; as birds are said to fly high above the sea in whose bosom the cities of the plain lie engulfed. Before us are the "huts" of the prisoners, looking like little irregular heaps of black rags, strewn thickly and in inextricable confusion over the ground, lying beside which are human forms, stretched at full length upon the sand, their upturned faces black with grime, and their naked bodies wet with dew; they lie in this unsheltered manner, because they have nothing to protect them against the night. Two tall trees stand in the corner, off to our right, looking grimly down upon the piteous spectacle. Turning round to our left, our eye passes rapidly over the low, white belt of fog that stretches across the pen from west to east, where lies the swamp from which those sleeping beings draw the water to quench their burning thirst, or cleanse their filthy garments; beyond the fog, we can faintly see a continuation of the irregular heaps which had attracted our attention at first, and the dim outline of the wall, upon whose top the sentry stands with sleepless eye, his long musket gleaming in the breaking light like a bar of polished silver. In the dim perspective we descry the skeleton roof of a long low

building, in the north-west extremity of the yard, but its outline is too faint to be examined from this point. Within the walls, a strip of unoccupied ground, a few yards in width, stretches around the whole—the inclosure made by the dead line—and to tread upon it is death. The damp morning mist rises upon the place, as the air grows warmer from the ascending sun, and the view is shut out from our eyes.

Treading lightly, lest we disturb these slumbering beings, whom it would be cruel to bring back to misery from the blissful unconsciousness into which they have sunk, let us examine the huts before us. The first that meets our eye is formed by fastening long strips of cloth together with wooden pins, which is then stretched across a couple of poles that are placed with one end upon the ground, the other resting upon a bank of sand, laboriously raised a few feet high by the hands; it is open like trellis-work, and black with smoke and dirt, and affords a covering only in spots to the wretched beings lying beneath it. Further on is another style of habitation—for these things contain all the household goods of two or three men. This consists of but two parts—a short pole, set upright in the earth, and a piece of blanket stretched over it. Next to



this, is a hole scooped out in the sand, in which the owner, while lying upon his back, can have a support for his back, and here half a dozen nearly naked men are lying, their faces turned from each other, like pigs.

But into it the rain sometimes settles, and drives the unfortunate occupants into the pelting storm. Another form of the burrow, is an improvement upon this primitive habitation; three or four have joined together in excavating beneath the surface, first digging a hole some three feet in depth, of the size of their bodies, and, afterward, scooping out the sand at

right angles to it; into these they crawl and are protected against the heat and storm; but the fine particles of which the roof is composed, becoming detached upon the lightest jar, drop down in their faces, threatening to smother them in their sleep. Here we find another hut; this has been built with adobe, formed from a bluish clay that was found near the swamp. With much labor and patience, the poor fellows have molded the materials with their hands and dried them in the sun; three walls have been built, three or four feet high, and slightly inclining toward the center, over which they have stretched an old shirt, which can be made of more service here than upon the owner's shoulders.

But some of these shelters are of a higher grade of comfort, and are inhabited by the acknowledged "aristocracy" of the prison. They are constructed of slabs, split from pine logs, which they had brought in from the surrounding forest during the time when the prisoners were permitted to hire a guard to go there with them. They are of sufficient size to accommodate six or seven men, and form a complete protection against the weather. They are high enough to allow the occupant to stand erect. Little slabs are placed around for seats; pegs and shelves are arranged upon the walls; bunks of "pine straw" are made upon the ground; and a door shuts out the beating storms. The last structure which we will examine is formed by placing several poles parallel to each other, over which two blankets sewed together are thrown, forming a burrow some eighteen inches high, and as long and wide as the blankets will allow. Its inmates must crawl beneath it, and, when in, are quite well protected. Very many of the men, those whom we see lying about us on the surface, are unfurnished with any "shanty," either dug in the ground or built upon it. They are mostly late arrivals, who have not yet been initiated into prison life, and are waiting to learn how to take advantage of the few conveniences that are furnished them. If we were allowed to go out into the woods, we could all be provided with cabins, for we are willing to help ourselves in every



way possible; or, if fear of our taking advantage of the brief liberty to make our escape prevents that, let the authorities bring us logs and furnish axes for us, and we will do the rest; or, supposing that to involve too great expense to the Confederate government, let us draw upon the money of which they have robbed us, and we will purchase the materials and hire them brought to us. It is not the fault of these men that they are destitute, for they are utterly helpless in the hands of their enemies; and these, unfortunately for us, are too little inclined to pity to assist us, and too brutal to allow us to help ourselves.

While we have been inspecting these novel shelters, the sun has risen above the horizon, and the prisoners begin to appear; for in the middle of the day the heat is too fervid to admit of much activity, and all the little "chores" which are necessary to be performed must be completed during the cool of the morning. The half-naked, squalid wretches, black with smoke and dirt, feebly drag their emaciated forms from the holes into which they had crawled the preceding night, and begin their preparations for the coming day. Passing quietly across the swamp, we hasten up the rising ground on the north side of the stockade, where a full view of the scene may be had at a glance. Taking our station at the summit, we watch the tattered forms as they creep slowly by, making their way to the creek for water. They approach the little stream, some carrying tin cups or pails made of empty fruit cans, into which they have inserted strings or wires to serve the purpose of handles; some bearing small buckets or wooden pails, which they have fashioned with their pocket-knives from pine sticks, or occasionally one of larger dimensions, formed with staves and hoops; while others bear old boot legs tightly sewed together, and many, very many, go empty handed, having been unable to procure any thing in which to carry the liquid. There is here every variety of dress, too, from the apparel of Adam before the fall to a ragged coat and pants, and these seem to have grown upon their forms, like bark upon a tree, so black and dirty have they become. There are men with one-legged pants,



and with no pants at all; men with coats of which one of the sleeves has been torn away for bandages, leaving the bare arm exposed; men with no covering but a pair of dirty drawers, too much torn and worn to be decently described; men without socks and shoes, or with one expiring shoe, the sole being upon the point of departure; hatless men, their long locks glued together with pitch and rolled up like ropes, hanging over their sunken eyes. They gather into a sort of file when they reach the swamp and pass upon the plank to the creek, each stooping down in turn to dip his little cup into the water, and turning back to seek his quarters again. More than ten thousand men, at this hour in the morning, daily visit this spot to get water for breakfast, while the partner of each remains behind to watch their common "effects." But behind this press that *walks* to the water side, come other men, who can not walk. They creep upon hands and knees, or crawl upon their breasts, pulling their bodies along by burying their elbows in the sand. These miserable beings, the victims of starvation and the consequent diseases, writhe and twist themselves to the stream. But they come not all back; for, overcome with the fatigue of their laborious effort, they creep to one side of the path and die.



Presently little fires spring up upon every hand, sending out wreaths of smoke, which rise a short distance above the pen and hover there in a dark cloud, through which the sun looks red. Let us approach these fires and examine the culinary department of the prison. Here are three miserable looking beings gathered around a few bits of blazing pines, which they have placed in a hole to economize the heat. Their hands, faces, and garments are black with soot and dirt, and their Saxon features alone distinguish them from the negro. They mix the little ra-

tion of meal with water and a few grains of salt. This mixture they knead upon a chip, using the utmost care that no particle of the meal be lost, and place the dough upon another green pine chip, and hold it before the smoking fire. It is painful to look upon them during this operation; to see the greed in their hollow eyes, while they watch the crumbs that occasionally drop from the narrow chip, as the compound, partially dried, is shaken by their trembling hands; and to note how anxiously they seek each tiny morsel among the dirt and ashes, and carefully replace it, when found. The bacon is toasted before the fire upon a stick, and, when cooked, has an oily, smoky taste. The mystery of their black appearance is easily solved. Pass your hand slowly through the smoke that rises from their fire, and the oily particles of soot cling tightly to it. Water will not dissolve it, and they have no soap to act the part of the "mutual friend," and bring the opposing elements of oil and water into harmony. If you rub your hand upon your clothes or your face, the black stain is left, and continuing the operation for a few moments, you have the same general look as the prisoners.

This is a fair specimen of the manner in which the bread is prepared for eating; yet there are other improved methods, while there are those that are even worse. Sometimes a *pone* is made by those who have bake pans; others, again, make mush, upon which a little sorghum is spread; some fry the dough in fat saved from the bacon; and yet others make dumplings, or rather, little round balls—in short, every change that hungry men can devise, with the few conveniences they have for the purpose, is rung upon the pittance of corn meal allowed them. But it remains corn meal in the end, notwithstanding the thousand devices to render it palatable.

Crossing the narrow paths that wind tortuously among the "shanties," trodden here and there without method by the weary feet of these wretched men, let us pause before this strip of black blanket that is stretched over a couple of poles. Stooping low down, we discover a soldier

stretched out at full length upon the bare ground. He is literally "alone in the world," and we learn upon questioning him that his comrade, but a day or two ago, died by his side, and has been carried out. He is too feeble to rise, as he tells us, and expects soon to be borne away in his turn. His face is begrimed with dirt, his hair is long and matted, the dark skin upon his hands and feet is drawn tightly over its skeleton frame, shrunk, caloused, dried, as it were, to the bone. He makes feeble replies to our inquiries, but we learn that he passed the long, dreary winter on Belle Island, where the starvation and exposure to the severe cold sowed the seeds of disease in his system, whose speedy end will be an obscure death and an unknown grave. He is racked with pain, and hopeless; he knows that a few days at most will end his misery; but he complains not of his hard fate, and expresses his willingness to suffer on, if necessary, for the love of that country whose life he has tried to save.

A few steps to the right we find a hideous object lying in a hole, which his hands have scooped out in the sand. The tattered rags that partially cover him can not conceal the bones that gleam through the skin; his eyes move fearfully in his head, his hands clench tightly together, his limbs are drawn up in horrible contortions by the cramp. The only motion of which his body is capable is a slow rolling from side to side upon his back as a pivot, and the vermin crawl in vast armies over his wretched person. He takes no notice of passing objects unless particularly addressed, for the world is rapidly going out to him. Placing our ear to his lips, we gather from his faint whispers that but a short time before he had left a happy home, flushed with hope and courage, to battle for liberty and right. A fond mother pressed her lips to his brow as, with tearful eyes, she bade him farewell; a kind sister, in cheering words, urged him on to duty; a brother's hand wrapped the garb of his country's defenders about his form; and in the field he had performed deeds of valor. He was captured, and—even while we linger beside him a faint shudder passes through his frame, and all is over. He,



too, will soon be borne away to a nameless grave, and his loved ones shall seek in vain to distinguish him from the thousands that sleep by his side.

Just in front of us, we see a throng gathered about an object, which, in other places than this, would draw tears of sympathy from the hardest heart, but scenes of horror are so frequent here that this excites but a passing interest. It is a young soldier, born and reared in a fertile township in Ohio; his early life had been passed among the pleasant vales of that noble state; every kindness which parental love could bestow had been lavished upon him, and he had ranked high among the promising and intelligent youth of his country—a man of talent, of literary attainments, of noble instincts. But reason is now



dethroned, and he tears his tattered rags from his emaciated form in his frenzy, gnashing his teeth and foaming with rage; but the paroxysm is momentary; his strength is exhausted; he falls to the

ground helpless as infancy, and is borne away by his comrades.

There is one form of disease which is almost too horrid to be witnessed, yet we can not understand the wretchedness of the prison without looking upon it. This is not a solitary case, but we shall find numerous similar ones before we leave this living charnel house. We instinctively pause as we reach the awful sight before us, holding our breath lest we inhale the terrible stench that arises from it. Here is a living being, who has become so exhausted from exposure that he is unable to rise from the ground, suffering with diarrhea in its last and worst form. He is covered with his own feces; the vermin crawl and riot upon his flesh, tumbling undisturbed into his eyes and ears and open mouth; the worms are feeding beneath his skin, burying themselves, where his limbs, swollen with scurvy, have burst open in running sores; they have



even found their way into his intestines, and form a living, writhing mass within him. His case has been represented to the surgeons, but they have pronounced him incurable, and he is left here in his misery, in which he will linger three or four days more. Proper care and treatment would have saved him long ago, but not now, and his comrades abandon him to death.

While we are gazing upon this sickening spectacle, the drum beats at the south gate, and the prisoners, dropping their half-cooked food, hasten to form themselves in ranks, preparatory to being counted. Being arranged in irregular lines, the strong men standing for the most part with uncovered heads—having no hats—the weak sitting or lying upon the ground, the sergeant passes carefully around to see if all the ranks are full, and searches among the huts for those that are unable to crawl to the line. Raising our eyes, we observe that each sentry-box contains two additional men, and that they grasp their muskets with a firm hand; the prisoners observe it also, and they know well that some of their comrades were missed at the last roll-call, and that the sentinels are there to fire upon any division that breaks ranks before the camp has been thoroughly searched. The officer comes forward, hastily passes from the head to the rear of the column, counting the standing men; the sergeant leads him to the sick that still remain in their hovels, unable to creep out, and to the dead, and the complement is filled; he sets the division down as full and passes on, the men still remaining in line. Let us also pass on with the officer till he comes to the division to which the missing man belonged. It is drawn up in line like the others; the sergeant reports his number present; the officer examines his book and finds that one is gone. The sergeant shakes his head when asked what has become of him; the men in rank are interrogated, but no reply is obtained. A sick man lying upon the ground points to a hole near by; the officer goes in the direction, stoops down and looks beneath the thin shell of earth; and there, in the bosom of his Mother—the Mother of us all—the missed one lies,

dead; dead, unknown to his comrades—to all, but the God who saw his dying struggle, and who will bring him in the last day, a living witness against the fiends that doomed him to such a fate.

The lost man found, the extra sentinels are relieved, the men break ranks and resume their occupations; but the sergeant has work yet to do, for the sick of his division are to be gathered up, the helpless upon blankets, those able to walk, in squads; and all must report at the south gate to receive their medicines. We pass over to this gate and cast a casual glance upon the mass of wretchedness gathered there. Nay shrink not, there are worse spectacles than this in this horrible pit; there are sights here to freeze the blood, scenes of suffering with which the most frightful pictures of the horrors of hell bear no parallel.

Gathered here from all parts of the stockade, and crowded in the small space, is half an acre of human beings suffering in every form of disease. Some are lying upon the blankets, upon which they have been brought; some are prone upon the earth, where they were laid by their comrades; some have crawled hither upon their hands and knees; and here they must remain for many long hours in this broiling sun without shelter or protection, waiting—waiting till their turn shall come to be served; yet, fourteen surgeons are busily working in yonder little inclosure, and each has his assistant, who can prescribe for most of the cases.

Here are to be seen the ravages of scurvy and diarrhea, of dysentery and fevers, of hunger and exposure; and as we stand looking upon the putrid mass, writhing in hideous contortions, a sickening stench arises from it that penetrates for miles, it is said, around the prison. We see men upon whom scorbutic sores have been long at work, and great holes are eaten in their faces; their limbs are black and swollen, or like rotten flesh, discharging a yellowish matter that emits this most offensive odor; in some the eyes have been destroyed, and they grope blindly about in the crowd. And here, too, are emaciated forms,

too weak to walk, and they turn their hollow eyes pleadingly upon us; they are the victims of diarrhea; their fleshless arms hang languidly by their sides, and their hollow cheeks are livid with leanness. But few of these men can be benefited now by the surgeon's skill; many will call for it but a little while; even while we stand here, some have felt the last agony and expired.

We turn horror-stricken away from this scene of misery, and, crossing the swamp upon loose boards, reach the street leading back from the north gate. Here is the grand business center of the stockade; for it is said that the "Universal Yankee," to support life, must trade, and that no two of that enterprising race ever met without "swapping" something. Whether this "unappeasable hankering" for trade had any thing to do with the origin of these hucksters' stands, or not, it is unnecessary to inquire; it is sufficient to know that here are gathered some thirty thousand Yankees, and that a regular daily market has been established, at which the owners realize what are to them great profits; for many of them can more than double the prison ration daily, besides providing themselves with clothing and comfortable shelter, through this constant interchange of articles of food.

Going upon the street, and facing east, we advance through the line of stands upon the north side, noting, by the way, the various articles of traffic. Here are booths arranged in fancy style; a rough slab, split from a log that had been brought in for the purpose, or purchased at a figure which would appal a tradesman in our cities, and covered with a clean rag, or sometimes a strip of paper, cut in various patterns, forms the counter, and upon it is spread the stock in trade, in such a manner as to attract the attention of the passers by; over the whole is stretched a wretched piece of blanket, an old coat, or a shirt, for an awning. There are others, consisting of nothing but a rough board, which is fastened upon four stakes driven into the ground; the most common kind, however, is wicker work formed of pine splinters, woven together with considerable skill and taste. But by far the greater number of tradesmen



are those who have no stands, and who carry on their "little business" upon the street. These men generally have but one or two articles for sale, and carry them in their hands; or, if they have nothing but meat, by impaling it upon a stick, and hawking it about the stockade. First and foremost of these traders are those who deal in the necessities of life—as peas, pones, wheat flour, and biscuit, corn bread, corn meal, soup, potatoes, rice, meat, and salt. These articles are of course held at almost fabulous prices, owing to the difficulty with which they are obtained, and only those who are flush in funds can afford to purchase them. In addition to these, are articles of luxury—tobacco, onions, eggs, soda, red peppers, gingerbread, soap, taffy, sour beer, tea, apples, peaches, watermelons, pails, wooden dishes, thread, buttons, etc. In exchange for these, a great variety of things are taken—money, gold and silver watches, and rings, shrewdly secreted from the lynx-eyed officials during the search prior to admission to the prison. In default of these things, the purchaser gives an old pocket-knife; a mug carved from wood, in making which he has spent much patient labor; rings made from bones that formed a part of the meat ration; and laurel pipe-bowls—all of which are readily taken, because they can be disposed of to the guard. Upon inquiring the price of some of these "goods" in greenbacks, we are told that wheat-flour sells to-day for one dollar per pint; peas for thirty cents; corn-meal, fifteen cents per pint; soup, five cents per half canteen; salt, twenty-five cents per table-spoonful. If we wish for luxuries, we are informed that for a peach we must pay fifty cents; for an apple, the same. Tobacco is one dollar and twenty-five cents a plug; a plug is nine or ten inches in length, by three in width, and is the cheapest luxury the market affords; while for soap we must pay one dollar and a half per bar, or go unwashed. The itinerant traders, like all of that ilk the world over, are the most noisy and persistent; having little to sell, and that of a poor quality, they try to make up their lack of importance in this respect by crying their wares at the top



of their voices. "Who has this nice ration of beef, for ten cents, only ten cents?" "Who has this dish of rice soup, well seasoned with salt and pepper, warranted the best on the ground?" "Here you can buy your cheap onions, only seventy-five cents apiece." "Who has this nice pail, warranted not to leak?" "Who is the next lucky man for a plate of rich bean soup, nicely peppered and salted? try it before you buy, and if you don't like it, you needn't take it." "Roll up, gentlemen, and get a glass of sour beer; quick, it's nearly gone." "Sour beer! sour beer! 'twill cure the scurvy in twenty-four hours, and will not intoxicate," etc.

It is a matter of much curiosity how these articles are procured for sale, and if we can gain the confidence of one of the heaviest merchants, he will inform us that they ostensibly come through the prison sutler, but in reality the most of them are smuggled in by the guards. This sutler is one of the tools of Winder, Wirz, and Quartermaster Humes, and it is his mission to parade his wares temptingly before the famished men, and wheedle them out of the articles of value which could not be found when they were robbed, giving a mere pittance in return. It is reported that he has been authorized by the Richmond government to trade for greenbacks, as a special favor to the Federal prisoners, it being treason for any one owing allegiance to the Southern Confederacy to traffic in the I. O. U's of Uncle Sam without a permit; but it is understood that these greenbacks fall, ultimately, into the hands of the prison officers, who store them up, or put them in circulation among the farmers in the vicinity. To preserve a monopoly of trade for themselves, the officers have issued an order making it a great offense against the peace and dignity of the Confederate States of America for any citizen or soldier, save and except the sutler aforesaid, to offer for sale, sell, barter, or exchange, any article of food or luxury with the prisoners in Camp Sumter confined, under the pain and penalty, if the offender be a soldier, of long and rigorous confinement in the block-house; and if it be a citizen, of punishment by fine.

But all these punishments do not prevent a contraband trade being kept up between the sentinels and the prisoners; for, upon dark nights, when the keen-eyed military



spies (called detectives, for dignity's sake) can not see, at a preconcerted signal the sentry throws a stone, to which two long strings are attached, across the dead line; one of these strings has a loop ring at the end, and is so arranged that it readily slides upon the main cord; to this the

prisoner attaches the article which he wishes to dispose of, and the guard carefully draws it up to the box for examination; if it is satisfactory, he returns the particular commodity agreed upon, and the "trade" is completed. In this manner a heavy contraband business is almost nightly carried on, resulting in great advantage to both sides—the prisoner saving his life, perhaps, and the sentry obtaining a gold watch for which he exchanges flour, peas, etc.; besides, the "raw material" can be purchased much cheaper of the smuggler than through the regularly authorized trader, while the presence of the latter accounts to the officers for the appearance of articles unknown to prisoners' rations, and turns suspicion away from the former.

Besides these markets, we find various manufactories, "tinker shops" and barber shops, where the busy workman labors all day "to turn an honest penny," or to pass away the time, and gain an extra ration. Here wooden buckets are made by the whilom cooper, with pine staves and hoops; rings of bone, and pipes of laurel, by the jeweler, who also cleans and repairs your watch, if you have one; here, also, the brewer prepares his sour beer, by putting a pint of corn meal into a pailful of water, adding a little sorghum molasses, or a red pepper if he has it, and letting it stand in the sun till it ferments, when the liquor

is decanted. This "sour beer" has a ready sale, for it is a really valuable remedy for the scurvy, being, as its name imports, acidulous, and tasting like newly fermented cider. We also find the bakeries in this locality, which consist merely of an oven, monitor-shaped: the "monitor" is made by first placing a layer of the mud found near the swamp upon the ground for the bottom, upon which a heap of sand is raised of the desired shape and dimensions; over this a layer of mud is then placed, with an opening for the mouth and chimney, and it is left to dry in the sun. When it is thoroughly dried, the oven is heated and the dough or meat baked. The "monitor" is generally a partnership concern, one of the firm remaining at home in the capacity of cook while the other disposes of the articles on the market; they also take in the raw material and bake it on shares, and thus turn their labor into food. Here, again, we shall find brokers' offices, where Confederate scrip is exchanged for greenbacks, for gold and silver coin, and watches, rings, etc., and where the broker sits the entire morning changing money of all kinds and descriptions, making his premiums by the difference in value between the Confederate blue and the United States greenback. In fact, we can find almost every kind of industry within this den, wherein men engage to keep their thoughts away from the misery around them.

But there are places, also, where the vices are nurtured—gamblers' stands, where men sit all day over cards and dice, tempting fortune, cheating, fighting, lying, swearing. Here are chuck-a-luck boards, three card monte, seven up and "seven over," faro banks, and all the simpler devices, by which men are wheedled out of their money and valuables by tricksters, under pretense of an appeal to the fickle goddess. It is not strange that men who have little to lose should venture it all in the attempt to increase it; for to lose is but to hasten the evil time by a few days at most, while to win may be salvation. Therefore, even gamblers have their share of patronage, and some of them do a thriving trade.



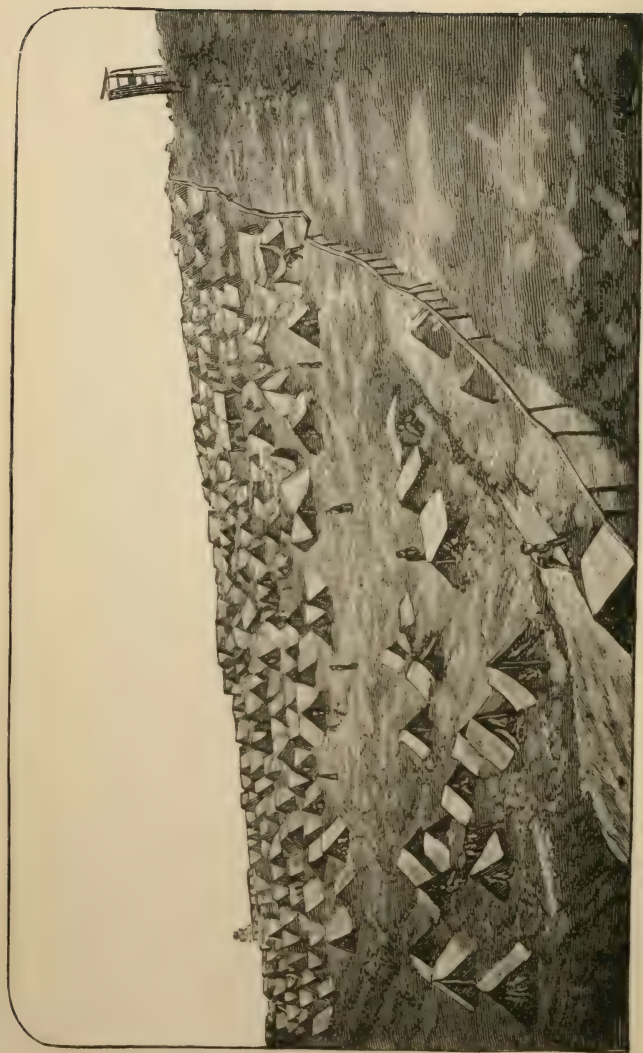
Leaving this busy scene, we walk around among the prisoners and examine their facilities for procuring water. The main reservoir is the creek, which passes through the swamp; but it also runs through the camp of the prison guard, and along the base of the cook house, outside the walls, receiving the refuse and garbage of both of these; the prisoners within have dug holes in various parts of the inclosure, laboriously excavating the earth with their hands and pieces of canteens, and drawing the dirt to the surface in old boot-legs. We shall find perhaps fifty of these water holes, but the fluid so obtained is pure and cool, and amply repays the patient toil required in their excavation. Near the northern extremity of the swamp is a spring, bubbling up from the marshy ground, which has been scooped out to a slight depth; and just outside the dead line is another, a living stream, flowing through a spout, fixed there by some daring prisoner in the darkness of night, or, mayhap, by some officer more humane than his fellows; but it is beyond the reach of the hand, and the prisoners tie their little cups upon a long stick and angle, as it were, for the cooling liquid.

Having examined this pen thus hastily, let us pass out again, where we came in, leaving these wretched beings, starving and dying, under the burning rays of this terrible sun; and, if you have been able, in this brief view, to understand the thousandth part of the misery here endured, to realize any thing of the horror by which you have been surrounded; or, on the other hand, if you can call up one thought of pity for the beings in authority over us, who have allowed their humanity to be all swallowed up in their vengeful passions, and who delight in nothing so much as in torturing us—then your visit has not been in vain.

Some time in the latter part of July, General Stoneman made his famous, but unfortunate raid upon Macon, the effect of which was felt at Andersonville, by both prisoner and jailor. There were, at that time, about thirty thousand men confined at this place, and it was greatly feared that General Stoneman would ride suddenly down upon







SOUTH-WEST VIEW OF ANDERSONVILLE, WITH DEAD LINE.

us, open the prison doors, and set us free. The valiant Captain Wirz was greatly "exercised" at the prospect of his experiment of gradually reducing the rations, until he should ascertain, with infinitesimal exactness, the precise amount of food a Yankee would require to support life, being interfered with, when it was so near its solution; he, therefore, under General Winder's order, commenced fortifying the place. For this purpose, a large force of negroes was conscripted, and immediately set at work. A strong earth-work was thrown up, some thirty rods from the south-west corner of the stockade, mounting nine light guns, five of which were trained to bear diagonally across that inclosure, to guard against an uprising of the prisoners in case of attack; about twenty-five rods from the north gate, and a little to the north of it, another earth-work was constructed, of smaller dimensions than the first, shaped like a parallelogram, and mounting five guns, three of which also bore upon the prison pen. Two lines stockade were built around the whole inclosure, about sixteen feet apart, the inner one being fifty yards from the wall of the prison pen. An earth-work was then raised on each corner of the new stockades, except on the south-west corner. A low intrenchment was then thrown up around the north end of the whole, which extended from the main road on the west side to the swamp on the east, and was arranged with angles so as to enfilade every approach from the north, east, and west. If it is remembered that the stockade was built upon two opposite elevations, it will be seen, by reference to the ground plan, that an attack from any direction upon the force guarding us, would be an attack against us also; for a gun fired from any point would either be instantly silenced by the artillery upon the fortifications, or its shot must be thrown toward the stockade, with nine chances in ten of its falling among the prisoners themselves—a method of release by no means gratifying to them, however well pleased they would have been to be taken out by their friends. Nor could the place have been taken by siege, for in that event

we must inevitably have starved to death, for the temper of both General Winder and Captain Wirz was such that they would have taken away all our rations for the use of the garrison, and reduced us to the last extremity, before they would have yielded the place. The prisoners were thus made the chief part of their own security.

Had Kilpatrick made a raid upon Andersonville, at any time before the fortifying of the place, with a force of five thousand men, and an equal number of extra horses, with arms and equipments, ten thousand able bodied men would have mounted the walls with a cheer that would have made the heavens ring. Indeed, it was currently reported and believed, among the prisoners, that an exchange had been postponed in order that our government might recapture us, and bright hopes of a speedy release animated our hearts. For days, the poor fellows cast their eyes northward and westward, straining every nerve to catch sight of the liberating host, or hear its heavy tramp in the adjacent forest. The sick stretched out their bony arms to receive the expected succor; the strong nerved themselves to fight bravely for the coming freedom. It was a piteous sight to see them sink back, day by day, and the old look of despondency creeping over them, as the bright hope grew fainter and fainter, and a deeper gloom settled down upon them, when the last flickering ray expired. Had the War Department been advised of the true state of the defenses, it might, with little difficulty, have released us all, at that time; but, after they were erected, the place could not have been taken without exterminating us.

In the early part of the summer, the camp was infested by gangs of thieves and marauders, who committed their depredations upon the peaceably disposed, both in the open light of day and in the darkness of the night. Men were robbed of money, watches, rings, and blankets openly and by stealth; some, who were known to have money, disappeared mysteriously and were never heard of afterward; assaults were frequently made in the streets, the victim knocked down and terribly beaten with clubs, and



his pockets rifled of their contents; it became necessary for the prisoners, in lying down to sleep, to attach their valuables to themselves, in such a manner that they could not be taken without arousing the slumberer; and to such a pitch of confidence and desperation did the ruffians reach, that no one felt secure in retaining any thing of value upon his person either by day or by night. These villains were called Moseby's Raiders, Moseby's Gang, or, more frequently, "Raiders." They seemed to have a regular organization, with leaders and subordinate officers, and single resistance to their assaults was useless, for the gang was always ready to support any of its members when occasion required. Occasionally a raider was caught by a strong force of the prisoners, and "bucked" or gagged; but this punishment was little regarded, and the criminal, after being released, signalized his repentance by knocking down and robbing the first man that came in his way. They had means of knowing and marking the man who had money; and, secretly arranging their plans, waylaid him when he was off his guard, or picked his pockets in the crowd upon the market, or while at the creek for water; but the more usual method by which they operated, was by open assault; in these cases, the place where the intended victim concealed his money was first discovered, when he was surrounded by the gang, one of whom seized him by the throat, to prevent his crying out, while the remainder relieved him of his treasure. For a long time no notice of these enormities was taken by the prison authorities; in fact, had they been disposed to take the matter in hand for correction, they would undoubtedly have failed in accomplishing any good result, on account of the difficulty of identifying the miscreants.



Some time during the latter part of June, their villainies reached a climax; one afternoon a man was assailed

by the gang, knocked down, beaten with clubs until he was covered with blood; his bones were broken, deep cuts made upon his body with the bludgeons, and his watch and sixty dollars in money taken from him. This brutal act aroused the whole camp, for if such atrocities were longer permitted to pass unpunished, every man was liable to similar treatment at any time. A number of the prisoners, among them the victim himself, represented the facts to General Winder, and appealed to him for protection, but he refused to do any thing more in the matter than sanction any action the prisoners themselves might adopt. At the request of the latter, a force of Confederate soldiers was sent into the prison, and eighty-six men were arrested, taken out, and placed under a strong guard. The prisoners within the stockade demanded a trial by jury for these men, and their demand was acceded to by General Winder. For this purpose, Captain Wirz summoned all the sergeants of detachments and divisions, laid the matter before them, and proposed that they request each of their respective divisions to select one man to represent it. This was accordingly done, when these representatives chose twelve of the most intelligent from among the men in the stockade to act as a jury, selecting for the purpose those who had but recently arrived, and who had, for that reason, seen but few of the raiders' operations; a presiding officer was appointed; counsel assigned both for the prosecution and the defense; and a clerk or secretary selected to record the proceedings in full.

When all the preliminaries were perfected, the accused were separately tried; the assault upon the man, as described above, being the particular crime in question. The trial was held in the little inclosure around the north gate, and continued about a week. Men were summoned from the stockade as witnesses, and closely and rigidly examined by the counsel for the defense, who had been an attorney before entering the army, and every precaution was adopted in sifting the evidence to insure a fair hearing for the accused. When all the witnesses had been examined, the judge summed up the evidence, and pre-

sented it to the jury, who, after duly considering it, found six men guilty of robbery and murder, and eighty not guilty, upon the specifications presented at the trial. The six convicted men were, thereupon, sentenced to be hanged, and the 11th day of July set for their execution. When the trial was completed, the criminals were placed in the "lying down stocks," and under strong guard, to prevent their escape, where they were retained until the day of the execution. Meanwhile, the prisoners in the stockade had procured lumber of the prison commander, and about midway the south section of the inclosure, and a little south of the wagon-road, had erected a scaffold of sufficient height that all within could witness the execution. Ropes were formed by splicing cords belonging to shelter tents, and such other things as could be adapted to the purpose. When all was in readiness, the criminals were brought in and delivered into the hands of the criminals by Captain Wirz, with these words: "Here, men, I bring you back the prisoners in as good condition as I received them; you can take them and do as you please with them, and may God help you." They were then taken in charge by the prisoners, and conducted to the scaffold, where they were placed upon the drop, their hands and feet fastened in the usual manner, caps were drawn over their faces, and the noose slipped over their heads. At the signal, the trap-door was sprung, and five of the guilty men swung off into eternity. The rope of the sixth broke, and, falling to the earth, he made an effort to escape, but he was soon retaken and securely suspended by the side of his fellow-criminals. The bodies remained hanging for half an hour, when they were taken down and placed in the "dead house," from which they were soon conveyed to the grave-yard and buried. A full account of the proceedings, from the beginning of the trial to the burial, was written by the clerk of the court, and transmitted by a flag of truce to the government at Washington.

It is painful to record this event, to contemplate these men, who disgraced the colors they wore, by their atrocious deeds; but justice to the prisoners themselves requires that



a full statement of the case be published. Some of the prisoners within the stockade disapproved of the proceedings, considering that they had no right to interfere, to the extent of depriving their fellow-men of life; the criminals themselves threw their principal defense upon this point, although each asserted his innocence to the last moment. There is no doubt that this terrible retribution was both just and necessary. Their lawless depredations had spread a complete terrorism throughout the stockade; no one felt



secure at any time, either in his treasure or his life, either by day or by night. They had prosecuted their villainous calling so long, and with such impunity, that they seemed to have abandoned all precautions for concealment in their operations. It was a matter of necessity that condign punishment

should be inflicted upon the guilty parties, in order that the peaceably disposed might enjoy the limited rights allowed them unmolested. There was surely no reason why this additional horror should be added to the already overwhelming wretchedness we were forced to endure; and the inalienable right of self-preservation, secured to us alike by natural and human law, demanded the infliction of the punishment these guilty men suffered.

There is no doubt that they were guilty of the crime of which they were convicted. The evidence before the jury was both voluminous and explicit; they were impartial men, who had not suffered in any manner from their depredations; they had ample time to consider and weigh the testimony; and, more than all, some of the ill-gotten gains were found in the possession of the accused, and identified by those from whom they had been taken. A less complete chain of circumstances has often led to the conviction of murderers in courts of justice.

Of the character of these men, little need be said.



That they were ruffians before entering the army was evident from the ease and method with which they entered upon their career of crime at Andersonville, and the entire absence of all restraint against a full and free indulgence in their vicious propensities left an open field for their operations. The ease with which they effected their crimes, and the good living consequent upon their possession of ready means with which to patronize the sutler and the markets, were allurements which they neither tried nor wished to resist. The consequences of their wickedness fell upon their own heads, and the justice of their sentence is vindicated by the necessities of the case.

The course pursued by the Confederate authorities in the matter is also deserving of credit. It was well known to them, as it was felt by the prisoners, that light or temporary punishment would not answer the purpose, and they did not wish to bear the responsibility of inflicting a severe one. They therefore turned the accused men over to trial and punishment by their fellows, only placing within their reach such facilities as were necessary for carrying out the sentence, whatever it might be. The names of the men who were executed are in my possession, but consideration for their friends, if any such remain, induces me to withhold them. A fuller statement than this can be found among the papers of the War Department at Washington.

After the execution of the raiders, quiet and security prevailed among the prisoners. Little acts of petty larceny occurred, as is usual in all camps, however well regulated, but nothing of particular value was stolen, and no more brutal assaults were made for the purpose of robbing the victim. A police or vigilance committee was organized, or rather organized itself, among the prisoners, for the preservation of order in the camp. The purpose for which it was designed was good, but there were acts of meanness perpetrated by these policemen that deserve the severest censure; for many a poor fellow, unable to help himself, was unmercifully beaten by them, without any

reason for their so doing. Yet, on the whole, they performed their disagreeable duty with as much leniency, perhaps, as could have been expected, though sometimes failing to discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. In virtue of their office, they received an extra ration daily.

Some time in July, permission was obtained from the Confederate government for a number of our men to proceed north, for the purpose of carrying to our government a statement of the situation in which we were placed, together with petitions for relief. These men were to be paroled on reaching a flag of truce point, provided a like number of rebel prisoners were also paroled by the United States authorities; otherwise, they were to return immediately. A mild statement was drawn up, setting forth the fact that we were without shelter and clothing; that the long confinement we had endured, and the suffering and disease incident to it to which we were exposed, was fast reducing our numbers, etc. The terrible crime practiced against us by depriving us of food, and the appalling sickness and mortality among the prisoners, were not mentioned or hinted at. To this were attached petitions for our speedy release, expressed in as strong terms as our jailors would permit, and signed by a large number of the members of the several divisions. The papers were forwarded, according to the permission granted; the men reached our lines successfully, and were paroled. But no good resulted from this, except to the men who carried the papers and were set at liberty; for the statements were made in such a manner as to awaken no further sympathy for us than the government would naturally feel for its children who were deprived of their liberty, and it was treated as the complainings of men who were unhappy in being thus restricted. Could the real state of the Andersonville prisoners have been known, something would undoubtedly have been done to relieve our sufferings; but it was only the most sanguine that anticipated any good results from this mission, and they only were disappointed in the event.

The messengers bore many letters to our friends at home; but, as is well known, a prison letter contains no intelligence bearing upon the manner of his treatment—in short, nothing except the fact that he is still alive and hopes soon to be released. This meager news is doubtless gratifying to our friends, but at the same time we would like to unburden our minds of the horrors with which they are filled, and receive their sympathy. But this is, of course, denied us, and we must suffer on in silence.

Express boxes were occasionally received by some of the prisoners; but, as at Danville, they had been subjected to search by the authorities, and, after leaving their hands, contained nothing more valuable than a loaf of mouldy cake, unfit for eating. All articles of use, either for eating or wearing, were confiscated. Packages of letters, also, came to the prison by flag of truce; but, under the regulations of Captain Wirz, every prisoner was compelled to pay the captain ten cents *in silver* before receiving his letter. It was very seldom that the villian's exchequer was benefited by this extortion; for few men in Andersonville possessed any money of any kind, much less in coin. The captain knew very well that the greater number of men had no money at all, and that those who were so fortunate as to possess greenbacks must buy their silver of his sutler, paying therefor an enormous premium. These letters had been prepaid, and bore a worthless photograph of Jeff Davis; but this made no difference; the captain must have hard cash, or he would keep the letters. And he kept them. And thus this puerile scoundrel, this sneaking, thieving, cowardly whipper of black women and helpless men, sought to gratify at the same time his avarice and his spite; to torment the wretched prisoners, already overwhelmed with disease and starvation, the result of his own barbarity. These letters were valueless to him, but priceless to their rightful owners; and many a famished man would have bargained his day's rations, though his life depended upon them, for the precious missive, bearing tidings of sympathy and love from home.



No physical torture could equal in intensity this deprivation. The poor fellows who had stood in the stocks for four and twenty hours, under a broiling sun, who had endured exposure and famine for months without a murmur, wept like children when they knew that kind words from loved and loving ones had come so near and were withheld. Yet this man gloated over their misery, and became profane in his delight at their tears. He carried the letters to his office, and experienced a devilish joy in reading and burning them, with no one to look on but himself.

A few incidents may not be without interest to the reader, although there was very little variation in the dull monotony of our existence; but there was sometimes an occurrence which raised a ghastly smile on our cadaverous faces, even though it was at misery itself.

A lieutenant of the guard came into the stockade one day to purchase buttons of the kind used by staff officers. Some of the men had cut such buttons from old uniforms found on the field and preserved them. While he was chaffering with some of the men, one of them quietly slipped behind the officer and cut the buttons from his coat, and, bringing them forward, offered them for sale. The lieutenant looked at them, said they were just the kind he wanted, and paid the price demanded, and soon after went out, where he was informed of his loss. The truth flashed suddenly upon him, and he went back into the stockade in search of the thief; but he had mingled with the crowd and could not be found. He did not trade with the Yankees again for buttons.

Soon after the arrival of the negro prisoners from Florida, Captain Wirz sent them out to work on the fortifications, giving them an extra ration for their labor. Seeing "how the thing worked," a white man blacked himself so as to resemble a son of Ham, and when in the morning the negroes were ordered to "fall in for work," he joined the party. He had been out but a short time, however, before the cheat was discovered, when Captain Wirz commanded him to be put into the standing stocks,



and afterward to receive fifty lashes, and sent back to the stockade. "He played nigger;" said the Captain, "I serve him nigger fare." It was a rich joke for the old tyrant, but unfortunate for the culprit.

It was a standing order, whenever a new lot of prisoners was admitted, that a heavy guard be drawn up in line of battle in such a manner as to flank the gate; and the guns in the ports were shotted, so as to guard against an outbreak of the prisoners. Taking a hint from this circumstance, some wag, with an air of the greatest secrecy, conveyed intelligence to Captain Wirz that he had just discovered an extensive plot for an immediate outbreak. It was a broiling hot afternoon, and the doughty captain fretted and swore at his raw Georgia militia for half an hour trying to get them into something like a line of battle. When all were ready, he stood sword in hand, at the head of his brave followers, swimming in perspiration, and cursing the "d——d cowardly Yankees" for not bursting through the gate, after he had been at so much trouble to give them a reception. It is needless to add that the "Yankees" did not come out.

The captain was greatly exercised with a fear that the prisoners would escape, and this dread, undoubtedly, caused him many sleepless nights; he seemed to think that every escape detracted so much from his honor, and to that extent, damaged his reputation as an officer. On this account, on one occasion, when the prisoners had crowded close upon the dead line, to witness the introduction of a new squad of men into the pen, the old rascal ordered a shell fired directly over the heads of the throng. No harm resulted from it, but we felt that it was hazardous remaining in that position, and "changed our base," with a degree of haste and disorder highly unbecoming a body of veteran soldiery; but we did not relish being operated upon by an undrilled militia gun squad, when a slight depression of the piece, in their unpracticed hands, would land a shell in our midst.

Some time in the early part of August, a violent thun-

der shower came up; the heavens seemed to be one sheet of flame, and in an instant the earth seemed converted into a broad lake. The little creek suddenly assumed the proportions of a large stream, foaming and dashing furiously through the stockade. Becoming dammed by the accumulated weeds and sticks, it finally swept down the walls on both sides, leaving wide gaps, through which escape would have been feasible and easy, had the prisoners known it in season. On discovering the breach in the wall, Captain Wirz fired the signal gun, and the whole prison guard, consisting of some five regiments, was turned out, with the captain at the head, to prevent accident; and there they stood, drenched to the skin, the captain's plumage drooping like a wet chicken's, swearing at the poor Yankees, as being the occasion of his soaked skin. The storm, however, passed away, leaving the creek and swamp well cleansed and purified; and what pleased the captain most, none of the prisoners escaped. Besides the thorough renovation of the camp, it proved an invaluable blessing to the captives in another and unexpected manner; for near the line of the stockade there burst forth a spring of pure cool water, whose unceasing flow furnished the prisoners with an abundant supply that never afterward failed.

On Saturday afternoons, some of the fair sex usually paid a visit to the stockade, gratifying, at the same time, their desire to see their husbands, brothers, and cousins, and their curiosity to witness an exhibition of live Yankees. These females were generally much pleased with the sight of us, and contrasted our decidedly untidy appearance with the looks of their gentler blooded friends, much to our disadvantage, it is to be feared. An officer's wife, a northern lady, inquired of one of the surgeon's clerks about the treatment of the prisoners, and was answered with a general statement of the facts. Captain Wirz overhearing something that did not please him, called the man to him, and, by dint of much sharp questioning, learned nearly the whole conversation, when he ordered the poor fellow back into the stockade again.

After this, we were prohibited, by an order, from conversation upon the treatment of the prisoners with any one not connected with the pen.

Some of these little incidents seem out of place; and to laugh at the brutal "jokes" played off upon us is like smiling in the face of death. But they exhibit the total unconcern manifested by our jailers for our misery, and the ease with which men delight in torturing others in their power, when all their better feelings are absorbed by the base passions of hatred and revenge.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

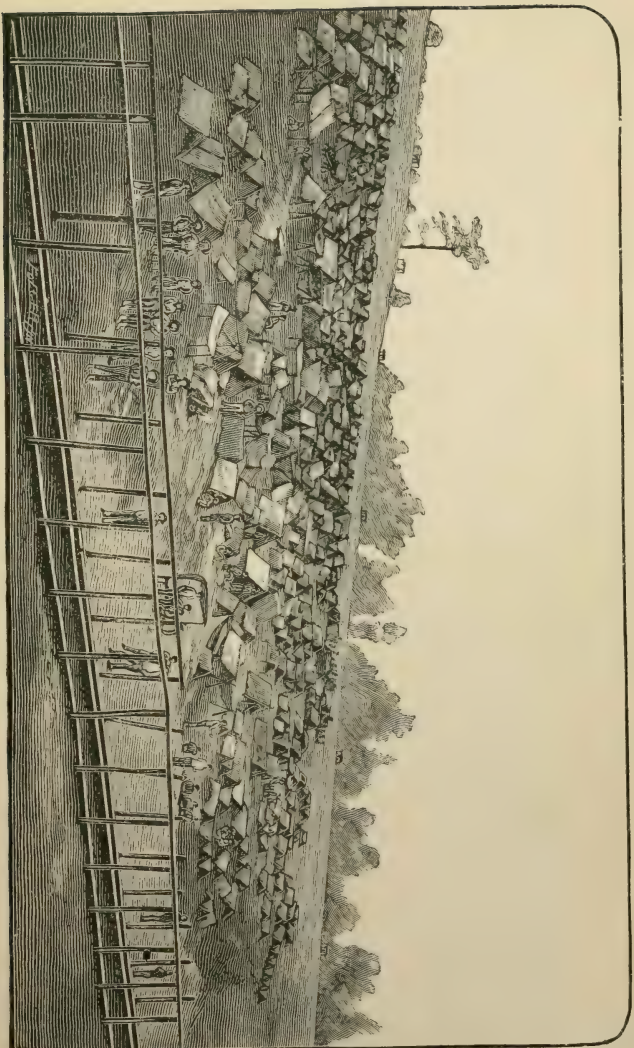
RATIONS—COOK HOUSES—ESCAPES—BLOOD-HOUNDS—PUNISHMENTS—BALL AND CHAIN—IRON COLLARS—LYING-DOWN STOCKS—REMOVAL OF HOSPITALS—SICK-CALL—HOSPITALS—THE DEAD—THE BURIAL—GENERAL WINDER—CAPTAIN WIRZ.



ON the 26th day of May, I was paroled as a surgeon's clerk, and removed from the interior of the stockade; from this time, during the day, I was at liberty, when off duty, to wander anywhere within the circuit of a mile, but at night was placed under guard at the hospital. When my duty was done for the day, I generally improved the opportunity to look about me, and to examine, as far as I could, into the practices of the prison authorities. By this means I became acquainted not only with the character of the men and their disposition toward us, but also with the manner in which the whole government and supply of the prison was conducted.

The rations consisted of corn meal, bacon, fresh beef, peas, rice, salt and sorghum molasses. The corn meal was unbolted, some of it ground with the cob, and often filled with sand and gravel. Much of it had apparently been put up while warm, and had become sour and musty, either during transportation or while in store. The bacon was lean, yellow, very salt, and maggoty; it had been brought to us unpacked, and was covered with dirt and cinders; it was so soft with rust that it could easily be pulled in pieces with the fingers. The beef was slaughtered near the prison, to which it was brought and thrown down in a pile in the north cook house, where it lay until it was issued to the prisoners. Here, in the hot climate, it





ANDERSONVILLE. SOUTH-EAST VIEW.



was soon infested with flies and maggots, and rapidly changed into a greenish color, emitting an offensive odor peculiar to decaying flesh ; it was very lean, but the heat rendered it quite tender before it was served up. The article denominated black peas, or cow peas, was brought in sacks, apparently just as it had left the threshing ground of the producer—having never been winnowed or cleansed of the fine pods, and the dirt which naturally mingles with all leguminous plants while growing in the field ; besides, they were filled with bugs, and many of them were so eaten as to leave nothing but the thick, tough skin of the pea in its natural shape. The rice was sour or musty, and had apparently been put up in a half-dried state, where it became heated and wholly unfitted for use.

There were two cook houses used in connection with the prison ; the first of these was in process of erection when the detachment to which I belonged entered the pen, and went into operation about the middle of May. It was located on the north side of and near the swamp, west of the prison, and was subsequently inclosed by the defensive stockades. At the time it was built, it was supposed to be of sufficient capacity to perform all the cooking necessary for the prisoners, and contained two large brick ovens and several kettles, set in brick work, for boiling the meat and peas, or rice ; but, it being found inadequate to supply the wants of the men, another building was constructed some time in the latter part of August ; it was located about a hundred yards north of the defenses, on a line with the west wall of the prison. This was designed and used exclusively for boiling the peas and the meat, and contained, perhaps, a dozen large potash kettles set in brick work ; the old cook house was thereafter used for baking the corn meal. A strong force of paroled prisoners was appointed to perform the work in these cook houses ; but with constant labor it was unable to supply our wants, and about one-half of the rations were issued raw.

The meal was prepared for baking by first pouring it in quantity into a large trough made for the purpose; a little salt was then added, when water enough was poured in to make it of the proper consistency, and the whole stirred with sticks to mix it thoroughly. The dough was baked in sheet-iron pans, twenty-four by sixteen inches in surface and two and one-half inches deep; the whole was divided into pones weighing ten or twelve ounces, and each of these pones constituted a day's ration of bread for one man. The utmost cleanliness could not be observed in mixing this "stuff;" the meal, as above stated, was partly corn and partly cob, and often contained materials that were neither of these; the water was dipped in quantity from the creek, and no means of cleansing it were furnished, and these, with the haste necessary to be made in preparing the dough, conspired to make the mixture unpalatable and sickening, particularly when cold. The prisoners who had charge of the cook house undoubtedly tried to prepare the food as well as they could, but all their efforts were vain with such limited facilities as they had.

The peas and rice were boiled in the north cook house; they were turned from the bags as they were brought to the prison, without cleansing or separation from the chaff and dirt, into the large potash kettles containing the water in which the meat had been boiled; the cooks here, as in the south cook house, had no means of cleansing the raw material, and, had they possessed the facilities, they had no time to devote to the purpose. To winnow, semi-weekly, a sufficient amount of peas for 30,000 rations, allowing a third of a pint to each, requires a long time, even with the aid of the best machines; but for twenty men to pick over, by hand, this vast amount, is simply impossible. Of these cooked rations, there were daily issued to each prisoner about ten ounces of bread, a fourth of a pound of bacon, or four or six ounces of beef (including the bone) in place of the bacon, and a teaspoonful of salt; twice a week, a pint of peas or rice was issued in addi-



tion, and occasionally a couple of tablespoonfuls of sorghum molasses. Sometimes a sort of mush was made to take the place of the pone, but, although it was a change from the monotonous corn bread, it was so unpalatable that the bread was preferred.

About half of the rations were issued raw, because of the vast amount of labor necessary to cook them in bulk at the cook-houses, or, rather, because the Confederate authorities were too poor, too indolent, or too brutal (probably the latter), to furnish facilities for the purpose; had the prisoners been provided with the means, they would gladly have performed the requisite labor. The manner in which these raw rations were issued has been already described; it is only necessary to state here that their amount was such as would make the same quantity as the cooked, and that they were issued alternately with the latter, one-half the prisoners receiving raw food one day, and cooked the next. I have here given the quantity issued during the early part of the season; but, as the hot weather advanced, and the number confined here increased, the daily allowance diminished until it became but a mere morsel to each man. How we endured such prolonged famine is a mystery; and that ten thousand men were that summer killed, in this most horrible of ways, by General Winder, aided, advised, and comforted by Captain Wirz, is most certain.

From the inauguration of the prison, constant and frequent attempts at escape had been made by the prisoners; and although, in almost all cases, these efforts had proved fruitless, the men were willing to engage in them at almost any hazard. But the attendant difficulties were numerous, and hard to be overcome, and had no end till the runaway was safe within our own army lines. Not only were the walls of the stockade to be passed, under the scrutiny of the sharp-sighted guards who were stationed upon their summit, but there were guards posted at night around the prison pen, with bright fires burning, so as to render it impossible to pass them without being discov-

ered. In addition to these precautions, a pack of blood-hounds was kept near at hand, which were every morning led around the stockade, when, if the track of the fugitive was discovered, it was followed up by the dogs until he was found, or the scent was lost; and, as if these were not sufficient, scouts were picketed upon the



principal roads, at a distance of some fifteen miles from Andersonville, to intercept the fugitives traveling upon the highway. The nearest point of security was nearly two hundred miles distant, and could be reached only by crossing an enemy's country, where, to inquire for food or direction would lead to recapture; yet the fugitive must seek both these, with the alternative of starvation, or being lost.

But, with all these difficulties before him, many a man attempted to escape from the prison, and, although few ever succeeded, their misfortune in nowise deterred others from making the endeavor; and many persisted in their efforts, even after several unsuccessful attempts. There were, of course, many ways adopted to escape from the stockade; some, though the number was few, scaling the walls, with the aid of a sentinel who had been bought over; others passing out in the ration wagons; one man simulated death, and was carried out by his comrades, and deposited in the "dead-house," from which he departed, when it became sufficiently dark; still others feigned sickness, and were taken to the hospital, whence they fled. A frequent



method of escape was to elude the guard, when the prisoners were foraging for wood in the forest, but this was soon stopped by Captain Wirz refusing to permit them to go out of the stockade on these foraging expeditions. In fact, every method was so strictly guarded against by the officials that the same mode could not easily be tried a second time without danger of immediate detection.

But the most frequent attempts to escape were by means of tunnels, the nature of the soil being peculiarly favorable to their digging, though but few ever succeeded in getting away by this means. There was no want of labor in excavating them, or of perseverance in carrying them on, and no lack of persistence in beginning new ones, after the old had been abandoned and filled up, on account of its being detected. But there were traitors in the camp, who, to curry favor with Captain Wirz, and to gain an extra ration, divulged the work, before its completion, when he would visit the spot, and direct the unlucky operators to refill the "d——d hole," under penalty of being deprived of rations until it was done. The only implements the prisoners could obtain, with which to dig the tunnels, were half canteens and their hands; and the dirt was removed in haversacks, and bags made of coat sleeves, or other cloth, which could be picked up, and was thrown into wells, or the swamp. The time for performing the labor was during the darkness of the night, while the tunnel was yet in its infancy; but, when it became advanced, one of the joint operators dug during the day, removing the earth to the mouth of the hole, whence it was carried away at night by his partners. Weary weeks and months were spent in these long tasks; but, after continued and patient labor; after, it may be, some who had begun the enterprise had found freedom through the gates of death; after the work was brought so near its completion that liberty seemed within their reach, these patient laborers, compelled to abandon the scheme by the cruel and cowardly informers, yet, nothing disheartened, formed a new plan, selected a



new place and carried on a new tunnel to end in the same manner as the first. A sergeant of a Minnesota regiment told the author at Millen that he had been engaged in digging thirteen different tunnels, every one of which had proved a failure through the reports of his fellow-prisoners to the authorities; yet, he said, he was as anxious as ever to try again.

At one time, several important tunnels had been for a number of weeks in operation before being discovered, and a general plan of escape based upon them was resolved upon. They were to be carried directly beneath several of the sentinel stands, and, when the stockade walls were reached, the earth was to be excavated five or six feet back from the timbers, leaving a shell at the top of sufficient thickness to prevent its falling in by its own weight. When all was ready, a number of strong men were to hurry rapidly past the dead line, after dark, and push the sentinel stands outward, when an organized force was to be in readiness to rush through the openings, overpower the guards, and seize the forts and guns. Desperate as this project seems, it could easily have been effected, if it had not been divulged. In all probability, many of the prisoners would have made their escape, for we had men capable of commanding us, and the guard, being raw militia, would have been easily overcome in the surprise and darkness. The leaders in the plan were arrested and put in irons. The scheme did not seem chimerical to Captain Wirz, for, immediately after it was discovered, he caused the stockade to be strengthened by spiking scantling across the logs, so as to prevent their being pushed over.

The fact that tunnels were being dug was easily discoverable by the color of the dirt thrown up in heaps around the inclosure. There was one, however, which troubled the military detectives considerably, and which was not discovered until reported by some of those who were in the secret. It was begun in one of the wells, at a proper depth from the surface. The workmen labored upon it every night until near daylight, when, concealing their



work by placing a board three or four inches from the mouth of the tunnel, and filling the intervening space so as to make it resemble the side of the well, they retired to their burrows for the day. A plan so ingenious and so faithfully persisted in deserved better success; but the traitors getting hold of the secret, an extra ration of corn bread overcame their sense of honor. It seemed impossible for a number to escape together; for, where there was a combination, there was sure to be a foolish or weak one to turn informer. It would also seem impracticable to construct a tunnel among so great a number so secretly that none but those engaged in the work should know of it; yet such was the case in several instances.

After the fugitive had released himself from the stockade, his next effort was to elude the pursuit of the dogs; but he was generally overtaken by them sooner or later, notwithstanding every precaution he might take. The animals employed at Andersonville were owned, it was said, by an old negro hunter named Turner, who lived about a mile from the station, and who received thirty dollars from Captain Wirz for every prisoner caught through their agency. Armed with a pair of navy revolvers, astride of his mule, and accompanied by his dogs, this old man made his appearance every morning at Captain Wirz's head-quarters, and passed around the stockade, his dogs meanwhile snuffing the ground eagerly. When the track was found, the successful animal set up a fearful yell of announcement, which was answered by all the remaining members of the pack, when the man upon the mule's back blew a ferocious blast upon the horn he carried slung over his shoulder, and all the brutes set off together with rapid speed in the pursuit.

When the prisoner had a "good start" of twenty-four hours or more, as was sometimes the case, the chase was long and difficult; but nothing would throw the fierce hounds from the track. They followed on, through swamps and thickets, over hill and ravine, across streams of water, and through the woods, until the unhappy fugitive was overtaken. Two of the dogs of the pack em-

ployed at Andersonville were trained to attack the man at a signal from the keeper, and this signal was sure to be given if any resistance was offered. Several of the fugitives were terribly bitten while offering resistance, and many a one who had eluded the guards and pickets had been returned to the prison with legs, neck, and ears bitten and torn in a most fearful manner, and nearly dead with loss of blood. Some of the worst cases of gangrene in the stockade originated in the merciless bite of these savage animals; and no medicine was ever issued to the victims, nor were they allowed to be removed to the hospital. Death by hanging or the bullet was preferable to the slow process of decay caused by the gangrene, which was certain to infect the wounds they had received.

The prisoner upon recapture was subjected to several grades of punishment, the first of which was the "standing stocks." This instrument of torture, equaling in barbarity any thing which history has ascribed to the cunning invention of the Spanish inquisition, was formed of four upright posts, strongly connected together at the top and bottom, so as to make a nearly square frame. Upon the sides of this frame, and near the top, were moveable bars, in which holes were cut for the hands; each of the bars was made to separate into two parts, for receiving the arm—the notches fitting closely to the wrist when the hand had been placed in position. Above these bars, and at right angles to them, in the middle of the frame, were two other bars, containing a notch for the neck, which also had a lateral and a vertical motion, the latter to enable them to be adjusted to the height of the culprit. At the bottom, were two similar and parallel bars, with notches for the legs. When the victim was "put up," his feet were first fastened, then his arms extended on a line parallel with the shoulders, and also fastened, and finally his neck "shut in," when he was left to his misery. In this position he was retained for two hours, then released for two hours, and so on during the day. This punishment sometimes continued for two days. And thus, unable to change in the least degree, starving, thirsting, bleeding,

with the hot sun of a July or August day pouring floods of liquid fire upon his unprotected head, the sufferer paid the initial penalty for his rash attempt to regain his liberty. After the stocks, came the ball and chain. For this punishment, two men were usually required; a thirty-two pound cannon ball was fastened to the outside leg of each, with a chain about two feet long, and another ball, weighing sixty-four pounds, chained between them; the chains by which these balls were attached to the legs, were so short that they could be carried only by attaching a string to the thirty-two pounder, and raising it by the hand; the sixty-four pound weight was supported by a stick when the victims wished to "walk out." The "jewelry" was continued upon the men for three or four weeks, or during the whim of Captain Wirz.



There was one refinement upon the ball and chain which deserves special mention; it was devised by Captain Wirz himself, and did great credit to his fiendish nature, and his hellish gust for torment. It was denominated the "chain gang," and was used in only one instance. The "gang" as first contained twelve men; they were fastened together



with short chains, twenty inches to two feet in length, which were attached to iron collars, riveted around their necks, each man being thus chained to the man on his right and left, and the twelve forming a circle; to one leg of

each a thirty-two pound ball was chained, while one sixty-four pounder was fastened to every four by the other leg. There was no possible manner in which the men could lie



down, sit down, or stand erect with any degree of ease; yet they were kept in this state for four weeks, in the open ground outside the stockade, exposed alike to storm and sun, with no covering but their ragged clothing, and no protection against the cold dews of the night. One of the gang was sick with chronic dysentery, but the surgeons' clerks were all forbidden to give him any medicine, and he died under the torture. He was taken out of his irons, after he was dead, and the remaining eleven forced to carry his share of the weight, attached to themselves, until the period of torture had expired. The crime for which these men were "put up" in this atrocious manner, was an attempted escape; some of them had broken from the hospital, and others had been recaptured once before.

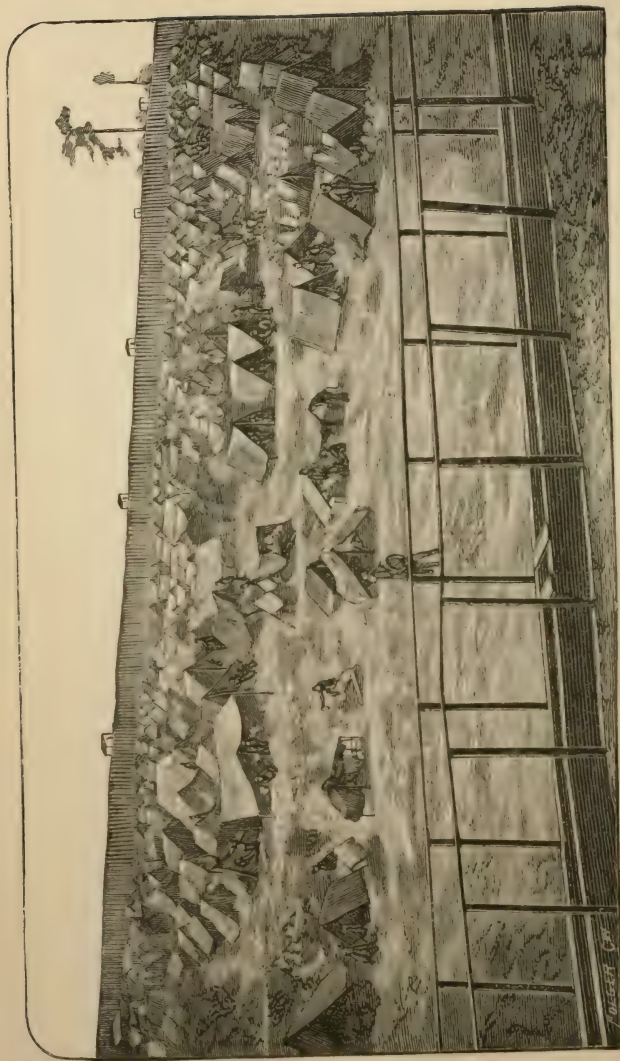
Another form of punishment, but somewhat milder, was adopted for less flagrant offenses, although it was also sometimes employed for attempted escapes; this was the "spread-eagle," or lying-down stocks. The offender's feet were fastened about twelve inches from the ground, and he was left to lie down or sit up, as pleased him best. It was certainly no easy or desirable position, as the author had occasion to know, but was much preferable to the standing stocks, or the ball and chain.



About the 20th of May, the hospitals of the prison were removed to the outside of the stockade, and located in a piece of timber to the south-east of the main inclosure, and the two consolidated into one, which included about two acres of land. It was inclosed by a board fence about six feet in height, was laid out in regular streets, or wards, and supplied with water from a creek that ran through the south-west corner, and was unadulterated with the filth and garbage either of the rebel camps or the prison pen. At first, the only covering was several pieces of can-







ANDERSONVILLE. SOUTH END VIEW OF STOCKADE.

was stretched over poles, which formed simply a protection against the sun and rain; but, afterward, wedge tents were provided, and, in a few instances, bunks were placed in them, upon which the sick men could be laid. Further than this, there was nothing between the patient and the earth, except his clothing and such a rag of a blanket as he might chance to possess.

There were two classes of paroled men, whose duties connected them with the sick—the one was known as “surgeon’s clerks,” the other as “hospital attendants” or nurses. It was the duty of the former to attend upon the surgeons at sick-call, write in a book prepared for the purpose the name, company, rank, regiment, detachment, division, diagnosis, and prescriptions for each man applying at the gate of the “sick-call” inclosure for medicine or treatment; they were also required to put up and distribute the prescribed remedies to the sick who were not admitted to the hospital. I was recommended by the men from No. 6 prison, in Danville, for the position of surgeon’s clerk (for which act of kind remembrance on their part I shall ever feel grateful), and removed from the stockade, as above stated, on the 26th of May. In this position I continued to act until the 8th of September following.

When the hospital was first established outside, only two surgeons were in attendance at the sick-call, but before the summer was past twelve additional ones, with each a clerk, were required, so rapidly had disease increased among us. It was the duty of the “sergeants of division” within the stockade to report with the sick at the south gate every morning at eight o’clock, or immediately after roll-call. Those of the men who were able to walk marched to the inclosure, while the disabled were brought upon blankets, old coats, and sometimes by being supported upon the shoulders of two of their comrades. The inclosure used for the sick-call was built about the south gate, and contained twelve clerk-stands or booths, which were fitted up with awnings and boards for writing upon and depositing the medicines.

The principal diseases treated at the sick-call were scurvy, diarrhea, dysentery, pneumonia, ulcers from vaccination, fevers, gangrene, ophthalmia, and erysipelas; a few others were sometimes met with, but they formed but a small part of the great whole of the misery and wretchedness to which the men were exposed. To facilitate the treatment for these diseases, formulas had been prepared, in tabular form, and numbered, so as to conform to the name of the diseases or class of diseases which they were intended to remedy. Thirty of these formulas were used at the sick-call. The medicines consisted of quinine, mercurial preparations, cayenne, chloride of potassa, acetic and tartaric acids, gum camphor, salts, sulphur, oil and fly blister, a few decoctions of indigenous roots and barks and newly-distilled whisky; but, for a great part of the time, no medicines of any kind were in the dispensary. All our prepared medicines came from Macon. Quinine and the more valuable drugs had labels of English manufacture, and had run the blockade at Charleston and Savannah. Bandages were so difficult to be obtained, that the same ones were washed and used again and again, until worn out; they were made of common, coarse, cotton cloth, and were used without lint or cotton, and from their repeated application became unfit for use, being liable to infect the wound to which they were applied with virus from the one from which they had been removed.

The patients examined at the sick-call were of two classes—those prescribed for at the clerk's stand and those admitted to the hospital. The former of these two classes was by far the most numerous, on account of the lack of accommodations for the latter. Those who remained behind were such as did not require special care, and those too far advanced in their disease to be saved by hospital treatment. The number of admissions was limited to the number of vacancies; and these were caused, not by the recovery and discharge of the patients, not by the enlargement of the hospital, but by death, which silently and swiftly made way for fresh victims; every man knew full well, when he received his



ticket admitting him to that living house of death, that the grim messenger had removed a comrade, whose place he was to occupy, waiting and watching painfully, till his turn should come, and another be brought in, as he was carried out.

The prisoners who had not recently been vaccinated, were compelled, under severe penalties, to undergo the operation, the surgeons having been requested, it was said by the United States government, to do this, as a preventive against the small-pox. It seemed strange to us that here, where the instances of that disease were so extremely rare, such an order should be given; but the sequel showed the devilish cunning of the authorities at Andersonville. *The virus used was impure*, and if the inoculation with the poison failed (as it did in many instances) of carrying off the patient, the wound would not heal, under the influence of the heat, starvation, and impure air, and invariably terminated in horrible looking ulcers. I have said that the virus was impure. I judge it to have been so from its effects, and not from a chemical analysis of it, but there were cases of vaccination which had been made at Danville, three months previous to our removal to Camp Sumter, that took the same form as every case assumed after our incarceration there. The worst cases at Andersonville were caused by the vaccination; the ravages of the scurvy, it is true, were fearful, and it worked in slight scratches and open sores, caused by the stings of insects, but in none of these did it assume the horrible form that characterized the inoculated wounds; and the only inference that can be drawn from this fact is, that our prisoners were poisoned by vaccination.

The scenes at the sick-call were horrible beyond description; yet I will attempt to paint the dreadful picture as clearly as it is possible with words, for here and at the hospital can alone be witnessed the true result of the privations and cruelties to which we were subjected. It must be remembered that diseases here are not of the ordinary form, such as may be seen at any hospital in the

vicinity of a populous city, nor are they the result of voluntary excesses on the part of the patient; but they are such as were forced upon strong, able-bodied men, with robust health, made more robust by the regimen of long military service in the field, and fortified by the hardships of such a life against disease in every form; upon men in whose blood no disease had ever lurked, but who, from childhood until now, had been strong and healthy. And it must also be borne in mind that these diseases did not come suddenly upon us, but that they were the results of a slow process that crept quietly but certainly on, beginning with insignificant signs and ending in death; or, what is worse, in permanent and incurable disease, that must follow the victim as long as life lasts—an unremitting source of pain and misery.

When the surgeons and their clerks have taken their places within the sick-call inclosure, the gate in their rear is closed, and the wicket in the great gate opened for the admission of the patients. My "stand" was situated near this wicket, and one-half of the sick passed it on their way to their surgeon for examination. Each surgeon had charge of a certain number of detachments, the numbers designating which were painted upon a board and hung conspicuously over the clerk's stand. By means of this guide, any man could readily find the surgeon to whom he must apply to be examined; and severe punishment was inflicted upon any clerk who issued medicine to a sick man that had not submitted to this examination. From my position, I could see the men as they came into the inclosure, and trace the line far back into the stockade itself. There on the road running nearly across the area, the wretched invalids had gathered in a dense crowd. Some were standing, or leaning, faint, emaciated, and weak, upon their stronger comrades; others were lying down upon the bare ground; and over all there hovered a hideous specter of death, which was reflected in their squalid forms, upon their thin, pale faces, and in their large hollow eyes that stared glassily upon us. The earth was black with human beings—a living, writhing mass of

famishing, agonizing life. Three thousand men daily visited the surgeons for remedies at this place, besides those to whom medicine was administered without a daily examination. On my own book, there were at one time nine hundred and forty-five names of sick men under treatment by one surgeon. Taking this as a basis, the fourteen clerks would have in charge thirteen thousand, two hundred and thirty patients; and these were exclusive of the men who refused to report at sick-call, and those who were confined in the hospital, the latter numbering about two thousand men. At this time, it is believed that there were not five thousand well men among the thirty-two thousand confined in the stockade. Those who had been longest in the stockade, and those who had come among us in a destitute condition, were the earliest and greatest sufferers. It required time, even in that den of filth and disease, and upon the scanty allowance given us, to break down the strong constitutional health of those men; but time did effect it, though some struggled long and bravely for life.

The detachments were called in regular order, each surgeon beginning with the lowest number on his list and proceeding to the highest. The surgeon upon whom I attended had charge of thirteen detachments. This would give him, if each division were full, three thousand, five hundred and ten men, over whose health he was called upon to preside. But the divisions were not full, many of them having become reduced more than one-half since they first entered the pen. Each applicant was separately presented, his name, etc., entered by the clerk, the date of his examination and the diagnosis of his disease, and the formula or formulas applicable to his case, carefully noted, when he was turned back into the stockade to wait till three o'clock, before his medicine was served out to him.

Let us take the list, as it stands upon my notes, for one day's duty (and it shall be a fair sample of any day during the months of July and August and the first eight days of September), and read the ills that prisoners at Ander-



sonville are heir to. The first man in the file before us is called, and, after being duly enrolled, begins to remove the filthy rags that he has bound around his arm, disclosing a sickening sight. It is a case of vaccination. The impure virus has wrought its terrible design, and here is the result. The incision has become infected with gangrene, and the upper arm is one mass of putrid flesh, which hangs in lumps in the running sore. It is but slightly swollen, and, where the flesh is not entirely gone, presents a fiery red appearance. The arm is nearly eaten in two, and unless the progress of the gangrene is stopped at once, the main artery will be severed, and death ensue from loss of blood. A nauseating stench arises as the bandage is taken off, and this the man must carry with him till death closes the scene; for, though he is sent at once to the wound dresser, and his arm is washed with nitric acid, the disease is too far advanced to be cured, and only temporary relief can be afforded him. Eighteen similar cases follow, some of them in a little less advanced stage, some even worse than this. All the cases of ulcerous vaccination usually report first in the morning.

Next follow the patients afflicted with gangrene; of these there are a great number, for the character of the food, the exposure to rains and sun, with the poisonous air they constantly breathe, render the blood impure, and the slightest abrasion of the skin soon becomes a putrid sore. A description of one of these cases will answer for all, for few of them ever received any attention until they were so far advanced as to obtain but little benefit from medicine. This is gangrene: The patient hobbles painfully to the stand, supported by a crutch which he has in some way procured, removes the foul shreds of woollen cloth that are bound around his left foot, and discovers the wound. The corrupted flesh has fallen from the bones, and the worms are crawling and tumbling riotously among the naked cords and ligaments, wantonly holding a premature feast upon their unburied food. Terrible as this may appear—it may be called impossible—it is the truth, and a hundred cases, equally awful, were to be wit-



nessed daily at the sick-call and in the hospital. This man had become so weakened in his intellect from exposure and starvation, that he was unable to take proper care of himself; to protect his naked feet from the blistering sun and the insects, he had torn off the sleeve of his coat and wrapped it around them; gangrene had found a scratch, and this was the result. The gangrene was a most fearful enemy, searching every pore of the skin for a wound, however slight or insignificant, where it fastened itself remorselessly, and clung with a tenacity whose grasp could not be loosened. Sometimes, where the incision in which the vaccine had been placed had apparently healed, it would break out afresh, and the gangrene would find it out and commence its revels; sometimes kernels under the arm would swell and require the use of the lancet; a wound was thus made, in which the monster poison revealed, till death cut short its career. And these infected men were turned back into crowded prison, to communicate their infection to others, until nearly all the wretched inmates were decaying, rotting, dropping piecemeal into the grave.

The scurvy is another and most frequent disease, and, like the gangrene, can receive only temporary relief here. It generally makes its first appearance in the mouth, the gums becoming spongy, frequently bleeding, and the teeth loosened, the breath becomes fetid, the patient is pale and languid, and the flesh swollen and livid in spots. It is caused by confinement to a limited range of food for a long time, and usually terminates in a dropsy, when the cords are drawn up, when the limbs become contorted and useless; the body swells to twice its natural size, the skin puffing out, as if distended with air; the flesh loses its elasticity, and, being pressed upon by the finger, retains the indentation for a long time. Sometimes the skin bursts open, when a wound is formed, and gangrene, with its auxiliary worms and tormenting vermin and insects, brings a horrible aid, and they, working in conjunction, soon destroy the victim. Nearly one-half the number of patients examined daily were afflicted

with this fearful scourge, very few of whom recovered, some of them lingering for weeks before the fatal termination of the disease. The patients exhibit a hideous spectacle, with their long, matted hair, their glaring eyes, in whose hollow depths the unappeasable craving for food is unmistakably read; their faces and hands and naked feet covered with dirt and filth; their foul rags hanging in tatters over their limbs and their bodies, and swarming with vermin; yet this spectacle was daily witnessed at the sick-call, was fully known and understood by the prison authorities, and nothing was done for our relief, no additional care bestowed upon us, no look of pity or sympathy from them ever met our eyes.

But these were not the only diseases to which we were exposed. Death busily plied his relentless work in other and if possible more painful forms. Diarrhea and dysentery, gaunt and grim, attacked the destined victim, and in a few days his strength waned, till the strong man was as weak as childhood; his skin became livid, and clung tightly to the bones from which the flesh had wasted away; his eyes sunk back deep beneath his forehead, and were dull and expressionless, and his thin lips were blue and trembling as if with cold. Eighty-seven names of men afflicted with these diseases are on my list for this day's work. Yet, what can be done for these men here? They can not be admitted to the hospital, for there is no room, and if there were room, it would be useless to send them there, as we shall presently see. We have no medicines that can counteract the influence of their scanty food, mixed, as it is, with dirt, and decayed, till a dog would refuse to eat it; and in this climate the hot days and cool, damp nights, the naked earth to sleep upon, and the poisoned air to breathe, are swift auxiliaries to these diseases. The patients must inevitably die; some of them may live a few weeks longer, but in ten days at farthest eighty of those eighty-seven men will lie beneath the turf in yonder Golgotha, beyond the reach of the atrocious tortures that have made their last days a hell.

In the month of June, there were twenty-one days of

rain, and the sky was not clear of clouds for one moment during all that dreary period. At times the heavens opened and poured floods of water down upon us; then the sun forced its way through a rift in the clouds, and, for a few minutes, scorched us with his flames, when his fire was extinguished by another torrent. The men were drenched in their open pen during the day, and at night they lay down still drenched to sleep upon beds of sand which were saturated with water. When the long rain ceased at last, the hot sun burst out upon them, raising deadly vapors from the swamps, which they breathed, and scorching and parching them with fire; the thermometer stood at  $104^{\circ}$  in the shade, and in the open ground the heat was terrific. In consequence of this storm, malignant fevers broke out among the prisoners, and for a long time after they raged with fearful violence. Pneumonia prevailed to a very great extent, and hundreds fell victims to its ravages. These cases continued for many weeks, and we find their diagnosis upon every clerk's list during the months of July and August. Erysipelas also appeared, but its career was soon run, for the unhappy patient died in a few days, unless the little wash of iodine, which was applied to the infected spot, succeeded in checking it at once. The glaring sun had smitten men with blindness, and they groped their way darkly among their comrades. Yet, in all this misery, squalor, and filth, there was not a ray of hope; the men must suffer on without succor and without help; the weary days seemed months, and the weeks an eternity, till it was as if we had been removed to a land of fiends, which the omnipresence of God could not reach, and a demon more merciless, more relentless than the prince of hell, ruled over us.

From eight o'clock till two, the work of examining the sick continued. Day after day, for weeks and months, those surgeons labored, breathing the unwholesome air, and in constant contact with those horrible diseases; but they were patient, faithful men, and their sympathy with the victims often benefited them as much as the medi-



cines they prescribed. But they acted under the orders of General Winder and Captain Wirz, and could do little beyond secretly expressing their adhorrence of the barbarity with which we were treated, and their wish to alleviate our sufferings. I gladly record the little acts of kindness performed by them, for they were verdant spots in that vast Sahara of misery. Drs. Watkins, Rowzie, Thornburg, Reeves, Williams, James, Thompson, Pelot, and Saunders deserve, and will receive, the lasting gratitude of the prisoners who received medical treatment at their hands, during that memorable summer at Andersonville. These, with five others, whose names need not be mentioned, were connected with the sick-call, and are to be distinguished from the hospital surgeons, the latter being exclusively engaged within the hospital inclosure.

After the examination at the sick-call, the clerks repaired to the dispensary, which was under the control of Chief Surgeon I. H. White, to put up the prescriptions made by the surgeons; this process required about an hour's time, and when it was completed, they returned to the sick-call stand, with the remedies, to distribute them to those for whom they were prescribed. The medicines were issued both in powder and in liquid form; the former were inclosed in papers, but the latter, the dispensary furnishing no bottles, were poured into tin and wooden cups, or whatever else the invalid possessed. It often happened that dilute sulphuric or nitric acid was the medicine prescribed, and this was received in the same utensil as was employed in cooking the food. It is left to the reader to judge what the result might well be. Their work done, the clerks were at liberty till six o'clock, at which time they were required to report at the hospital, where they remained under guard till the following morning. Much of the time the dispensary was without medicines, and very often only a few of the remedies prescribed were to be had there. Yet the farce of examination was frequently gone through with and prescriptions made, even when it was known beforehand that there was nothing in the dispensary, with which to put them up. Whether the fault



lies at the door of the chief surgeon, or Captain Wirz, or of the Confederate surgeons at Richmond, is not known. Probably Captain Wirz is not to be blamed in this matter, for he could not increase his gains by keeping back the medicines. There were many times, also, when there was no sick-call for several days in succession; and sometimes, after the examinations had commenced, the captain came down from his head-quarters, ordered surgeons and clerks away, and sent the sick men back into the stockade. The reasons for these interruptions were various; sometimes a new lot of victims had arrived, and were to be admitted to the prison, a thing easily done, to be sure, without disturbing us, by opening the north gate; but the captain in such a case would have failed to exhibit his martial bearing at the head of his Georgia militia, and the whole prison must be collected to witness the warlike spectacle; sometimes rumors of an extensive outbreak had exercised his mind, and he must get his men in line of battle, a long, tedious undertaking (there being no fences against which they could be dressed), in performing which the doughty warrior expended much patience and many oaths; sometimes, again, the pen must be searched for tunnels or for missing men; and on all occasions of like public character, the sick must be neglected; perhaps the villain feared the Confederate medicines might be of benefit to the Yankees if regularly administered, a consummation most undesirable both to Winder and Wirz.

The number of men admitted to the hospital by each surgeon, never exceeded eight at one time, but the usual number was three. On one occasion, however, soon after the enlargement of the hospital, Captain Wirz issued an order that all sick men, who were brought to the sick-call upon blankets, should be admitted; acting under this order (the surgeon whom I attended being absent), I issued eighty tickets of admission—by far the largest number ever issued in one day. The captain was exceedingly angry with me for doing this, and cursed me roundly for it; but I pointed him to the order and continued about my

business; none of the men were sent back into the stockade, but the order was speedily revoked.

Every person to gain admittance to the hospital grounds, was provided with a ticket, signed by the surgeon who examined him. This ticket contained the name, rank, company, and regiment of the patient, together with the name of his disease, and was necessary in order that in case the man died, as frequently happened, before reaching the hospital, his name might be properly registered in a book kept for that purpose. When he reached the hospital he was laid upon the ground, near the gate, and inside the inclosure, where he remained till the hospital attendants had sufficient unoccupied time to place him beneath the shelter of a tent; sometimes he was compelled to lie in the open air till sundown, and sometimes he was not moved till the next morning; many died at the gate while waiting to be placed in the tent. If he survived long enough, he was taken up by the nurses, carried to a vacant spot in the hospital, and deposited upon the bare ground, to remain until death should make his place also vacant.

The hospital inclosure was laid out in streets, and the tents were pitched in rows or blocks, to facilitate communication with the patients; the tents were of the wedge form, arranged so as to face due north, and were open at both ends; the center pole was about five feet high, and the canvas sloped quite to the earth, forming the sides of the shelter; five men were usually placed in each tent. There were, besides the "regular" tents, a few coverings made of canvas, stretched over poles; these were more open than the "wedges," and were larger and more convenient; a few wall tents were also to be found, but they were mostly used for storing the medicines. There was nothing on the ground for the sick to lie upon, and their feverish forms, with no covering except the wretched rags they chanced to wear, were deposited upon the naked earth. About two thousand sick were constantly in the hospital; some of the patients remained there for a long time, but the majority were speedily released by death.

The diseases treated at the hospital were similar to those

already described, while we were speaking of the sick-call, the only difference being that they were generally at a more advanced stage, and that there were a great number collected in a small area. For convenience in visiting the sick, the surgeons had divided the hospital into wards, in each of which was a ward-master with a company of nurses. The internal regulations for performing duty, were similar to those of the United States military hospitals. Each of the surgeons had charge of two or more of the wards, which he visited daily, passing around among the men and hurrying through with the disagreeable duty as rapidly as possible. There were generally six, and sometimes seven physicians in attendance, and dividing the sick equally among them, would give nearly three hundred to each. With so many to visit daily, and with so few conveniences for supplying their demands, these men could do very little good. The invalids did not want the surgeon's skill; food was the only medicine that could afford any relief, and the surgeons could not furnish that.

The rations for the hospital were prepared by paroled prisoners, and did not differ materially, either in kind, quantity, or mode of cooking, from those issued to the prisoners in the stockade. Occasionally, however, a few vegetables found their way to Andersonville, but their quantity was too small to effect much good; these, together with the liquor in which the meat had been boiled, were made into a soup—a kind of food which the men afflicted with bowel complaints could not eat with safety, and such as no well man would taste at home.

The sick who were afflicted with gangrene were generally separated from the others, and filled two wards of the hospital. These wards presented a most horrible spectacle. I have passed through them in the cool of the morning, and in the heat of the day, when the purer air of the one had caused an abatement of the corroding distemper, and when the sultriness of the other had spurred it into a swifter career; and I have seen living men lying there, upon the bare ground, uncovered by any thing except the filthiest rags, which were saturated with purulent matter,



and green with mold, rotting silently away, though tortured with intense pain, the dead flesh dropping from their bones on the sand upon which they were lying, while hideous worms, too greedy to wait till life was extinct, before commencing their ravenous feast, tumbled and reveled and rioted in the putrid mass. I have visited the field of battle, and walked among the dead, many days after the conflict, and witnessed the unburied bodies of men, thrown together in heaps by a bursting shell, slowly decaying in the hot sun, but the stench arising from them, and their horrid appearance, were less sickening and less repulsive than this. I have seen men in this hospital suffer amputation again and again, in the fruitless effort to stay the ravages of this fearful disease; and under the knife, and while lying upon the ground, blistering and burning, the ceaseless gnawing within forced from their otherwise silent lips the low, moaning, pleading cry for food; and I have listened to this heart-rending call, and looked upon those emaciated limbs, till my blood boiled with helpless rage against the worse than brutal villains who planned these atrocious crimes and the coward who delighted in carrying out their details.

No language can describe this bed of rottenness; since the tongue of man first learned to syllable his thoughts, such cruelties were never before devised and practiced—and words are wanting to depict them. The surgeons made their reports, in which were represented the true condition of these dying men, and begged for reform, for food, for covering; but they might as well have sought mercy from death—better have done so, for death is merciful sometimes, but our tormentors never.

The gangrene wards were the worst in the hospital, but the others were shocking. Famine! famine is everywhere. Pass among the fevers; hear the dying moans of the victims of diarrhea, of dysentery; listen to the hollow cough of the consumptive; look upon the trembling limbs and pallid faces of all these men, and the burden of every cry, as it goes out into the solitudes around us, is food! a morsel of food! And we hear that fearful cry, growing



fainter and fainter, as the famished victim sinks down into the darkness; and the feeble echo vanishes, as the turbid waves of death close over him, forever.

There was among the surgeons who attended in the hospital a Dr. Barrows, who belonged to a Massachusetts regiment; he had been captured and sent here early in the season, and was paroled to act in the capacity of surgeon. He was a kind-hearted and skillful physician, and devoted his time to the sick under his care with tireless industry and patience. Yet he could do little to alleviate their sufferings, in the condition in which they were placed. He attempted to procure men from the stockade to go with him, under guard, to cut timber in the adjacent woods, with which to build cabins for the hospital, pledging himself for their return, but Captain Wirz denied him the request, and the cabins were never built; could he have succeeded in his attempt to erect these huts, he would have vastly reduced the suffering and wretchedness of the inmates of the hospital. His well-meant endeavors were fully appreciated by the sufferers, and the survivors will hold him in lasting gratitude.

The men were deeply grateful for the smallest favors shown them, and their thanks to those who did even the slightest thing in their behalf were such as would draw tears even from the eyes of a stoic. On one occasion, I saw a man lying upon his back, almost in the last agony; his eyes were rolling fearfully in his head, and he seemed utterly unconscious. Going to the steward, I procured a little whisky and gave him; it seemed to bring him back from the grave, and he feebly took my hand and poured out his thanks so profusely and so fervently that (I must confess to a woman's weakness) tears came to my eyes.

Cheerful conversation upon every subject, but more especially upon exchange, had an almost wonderful effect upon the men; the poor fellows would sometimes catch a gleam of hope from them, which would brighten them for days. But there was little opportunity for the nurses in the hospital to engage in conversation with them, and they

were left to their own thoughts mostly, which were of a gloomy, hopeless cast.

The Rev. William John Hamilton, a Catholic priest, visited the hospital almost daily, and ministered freely and faithfully to the wants of the dying. He was the only clergyman, as far as I remember, that ever visited us. He was a noble man—a hero—for by coming here he exposed himself to great danger of infection with the diseases. He seemed actuated by the holiest motives, kneeling down by the side of the decaying bodies of living men, in the stench and filth of the gangrene wards, and interceding with heaven for that mercy to the sufferers which they could not obtain on earth. Many and many a time have I seen him thus praying with the dying, consoling alike the Protestant and the believer in his own peculiar faith. His services were more than welcome to many, and were sought by all; for in his kind and sympathizing looks, his mild, but earnest appearance, the despairing prisoners read that humanity had not all forsaken mankind.

A number of small boys had been captured by the rebels at various places and brought to Andersonville; some of them had been drummer boys in the army, but many were mere hangers-on of camp. Among them was a little bright-eyed fellow who went by the name of "Mike;" he was the Johnny Clem of Andersonville, and performed many exploits that would render a much older person famous. Being very active, shrewd and self-possessed, he soon became the pet of the men at the hospital, where he, with the other little boys, was allowed to remain; the prisoners sewed a sergeant's chevron upon his little blouse, and Captain Wirz told him that he was henceforth to be considered responsible for the good conduct and faithful "attendance" of the boys in the hospital. When the blackberries were ripe, Mike, having gained permission of the chief surgeon, marshaled his squad of boys into the fields to gather them for the sick. He was generally quite successful, and the cool, luscious fruit was more highly prized by the grateful men for the hand that gave it to them. One night Mike did not return to the hospital, and

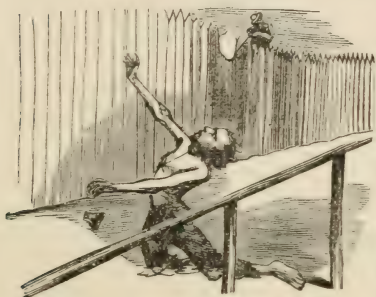
being sought for was found at the butchers' quarters, for which act of disobedience to orders Captain Wirz commanded him to be returned to the stockade. He had not remained there long, however, before Captain Wirz allowed him his liberty again. He belonged to the 2d New Jersey Cavalry. What disposition was subsequently made of him, I never learned.

Among the prisoners at the hospital was a crazy soldier named Jones. This man had become insane through long exposure to the sun and famine, and was at times a source of great annoyance to the sick. His insanity took an immoral form, and he was constantly stealing articles of food or apparel. One of his tricks was to pilfer the wood which the surgeons' clerks had gathered for cooking, and to make a bonfire of it, warming himself with the greatest enjoyment, even when the day was excessively hot. He had also a decided proclivity for washing himself and his clothes, performing the operation at all hours of the day and night. So great was his *penchant* for washing, that he frequently picked up old, worn-out coats and pieces of pants, and, carrying them to the little creek, cleansed them with as much perseverance and gusto as a professional laundress. He considered his comrades as an inferior class of beings, whose habits and tastes led them to remain in their filth, while he, being a gentleman, must keep clean or lose his rightful superiority and dignity. To this end he often took off his coat and washed it thoroughly, putting it on while still dripping, and strutting around among the prisoners with his head erect, like a Richmond dandy. He would sometimes beat the weak prisoners unmercifully, for which offense the chief of police tied his hands behind him—Jones meanwhile grating his teeth and cursing fearfully. His pranks were generally of a harmless character, and the volubility with which he talked of his importance as a member of society, and the fearful retribution in store for the rebels through his means, served to amuse the sick and to divert their thoughts from a contemplation of their own misery; and in this manner the



poor fellow unwittingly did much good. He died, however, some time in the early part of August.

The guard posted about the hospital, either acting under orders or from some other motive, were very reckless in the performance of their duty. They frequently discharged their muskets into the hospital ground, and performed other acts of violence wholly uncalled for. One



night, a sick man, feeling chilly upon his cold, earthy bed, arose and crawled to a fire which was burning in the inclosure. A sentinel saw him sitting before it, drew up his piece, and discharged it. The ball passed through a crevice between the boards of the fence and

hit the man, breaking his arm and splintering the bone of his leg. Dr. Barrows immediately came out of his quarters and dressed the wounds, but the unfortunate victim never recovered. There was not the slightest occasion for this murder. The invalid was on the ground assigned to all the inmates of the hospital. He was quietly sitting by the fire which it was customary to light every evening, with no thought of wrong in doing so. The sentinel could see him only by looking through the boards of the fence, which was six feet high. He gave no word of warning, but, after the victim had seated himself, fired upon him in cold blood, as if he had been a dog. It was murder—as much so as if the man had been sleeping peacefully in his bed; yet the assassin was never called to account for it, although Captain Wirz knew the full particulars of the affair, and by virtue of his office could and should have punished him severely, as an example to others.

The dead-house was located in the south-west corner of the hospital inclosure. It was formed by setting four posts in the ground, upon which boards were nailed to the height of six feet. A piece of canvas was stretched over



it for a roof, and an opening left on the west side, which served the purpose of an entrance. To this contrivance all the dead were removed during the day, both from the hospital and the stockade. The manner in which these remains were treated, under the directions of Captain Wirz, will illustrate the value placed upon the life of a Yankee prisoner by him; for the respect in which the living are held, even among savage nations, is oftenest known by the treatment of their remains after the spark of life has been extinguished.

In the early morning, the dead of the preceding day and night were gathered up, under the directions of the sergeants of divisions, and deposited in irregular lines on the road leading from the south gate, and near the dead line. When the gate was opened (which was at eight o'clock), they were taken up one by one, placed upon a hand-stretcher, and carried out to the dead-house. At these times, there was always a large crowd of men gathered around the dead, eagerly and clamorously asserting their right to carry the bodies out. Those admitted to this ghastly privilege were allowed on their return to collect a few sticks of wood which lay upon the ground between the stockade and the hospital. The wood was almost priceless to them, for a small handful, such as they could pick up, readily sold for five dollars, and with this money they could purchase fifteen Andersonville rations, paying even the exorbitant prices demanded for food. Sometimes the poor men, in their anxiety to get outside the stockade in this manner, quarreled and fought, claiming priority of right in performance of the melancholy office. In the latter part of August or the early part of September, the number of the dead increased so rapidly that it was found impracticable to take the bodies from the stockade to the dead-house, and they were placed in rows, under an awning of pine boughs, just outside the defenses and near the road to the cemetery. Here they remained in the hot sun or the storms until their turn came for burial.

The men who died in the hospital were carried out by

the nurses of the ward to which they belonged, and placed in the street in front of the tents, whenever, at any time of the day or night, they were found, whether in the melting heat or the drenching rain. Here the bodies remained until the two men who were appointed for the purpose came around with a hand-stretcher and carried them to the dead-house.

In the stockade, the dead were found in a great variety of places. Sometimes they were lying beneath their rude tents with their comrades, the time of their departure being unknown even to him by whose side they were lying. Sometimes they had crawled into a hole in the earth which had been excavated for shelter, and where they remained unknown till the stench arising from their decay or the search at the roll-call revealed them. Sometimes they had dragged themselves to the swamp, to quench by a draught of water the burning thirst that consumed them, and died with the effort. Sometimes, unable longer to endure their misery and pain, they threw themselves beyond the dead line and were shot by the guards. In the hospital, the dead and the living lay side by side until the nurse discovered them; and it was not infrequent that hours passed before the living and the dead were separated. I have known three men in the same tent to bid each other good-night, and the morrow's sun to awaken the third to find his comrades upon his right and left sleeping forever. The prisoners at Andersonville died without a struggle, and apparently without pain. They expired so quietly, that one standing beside and watching them could not distinguish when the last breath was drawn. They were so wasted by disease and famine that the spirit parted from its earthly tenement as quietly as the flame expires among the embers.

The dead-house had been constructed of insufficient dimensions to contain the bodies of all that died; sometimes forty, often thirty, were placed upon the ground outside its limits, where they lay in the open air, with some vain attempt at regularity in their arrangement. Within and around this place, the final results of our treatment were

to be seen; here, indeed, were the fruits of the "natural agencies," which were to do *the work* "faster than the bullet." I have said that the attempt to place the bodies in regular lines was vain; it became so, because of the contorted forms of the deceased, particularly of those who died from the effects of scurvy. In these the cords had become affected, and by their contraction had drawn up the limbs into every hideous shape; the flesh was livid and and swollen, even to bursting, in many places; large open sores—pools of corruption—were upon their bodies, and the vermin swarmed in the rags that covered them. The victims of gangrene presented a sickening sight; the flesh was eaten from their cheeks, exposing the teeth and bones, and upon their faces sat a skeleton grin, horrible to behold. There was also the meager frame-work of men wasted away by diarrhea and fever, and the pallid lips of the consumptive. And the dead lay there upon the bare ground, clad in the filthy rags in which they died, covered with filth, and dirt and parasites, their sallow faces upturned to heaven, their lusterless eyes fixed, large, staring, and hollow, and their jaws dropped wide apart; their naked feet pinched with leanness, and dark with smoke and grime, and their fingers, fleshless and bony and black beneath the nails, lightly clenched as they had faintly struggled in the last agony. Pinned upon the breast of each was a white label, which contained the number of the deceased.

Nor were the numbers of the dead few and occasional; during the month of August, two thousand nine hundred and ninety bodies were deposited in and around the dead-house previous to burial—an average of more than ninety-six per day—exceeding by one thousand the largest brigade engaged in the battle of Stone River, and being nearly seven-eighths as many as the entire division of Brigadier-General Van Cleve, in that famous engagement. But during the latter part of the month the mortality was much greater than at first, the number of dead being one hundred, one hundred and ten, one hundred and twenty,



one hundred and twenty-five, one hundred and twenty-seven per day.

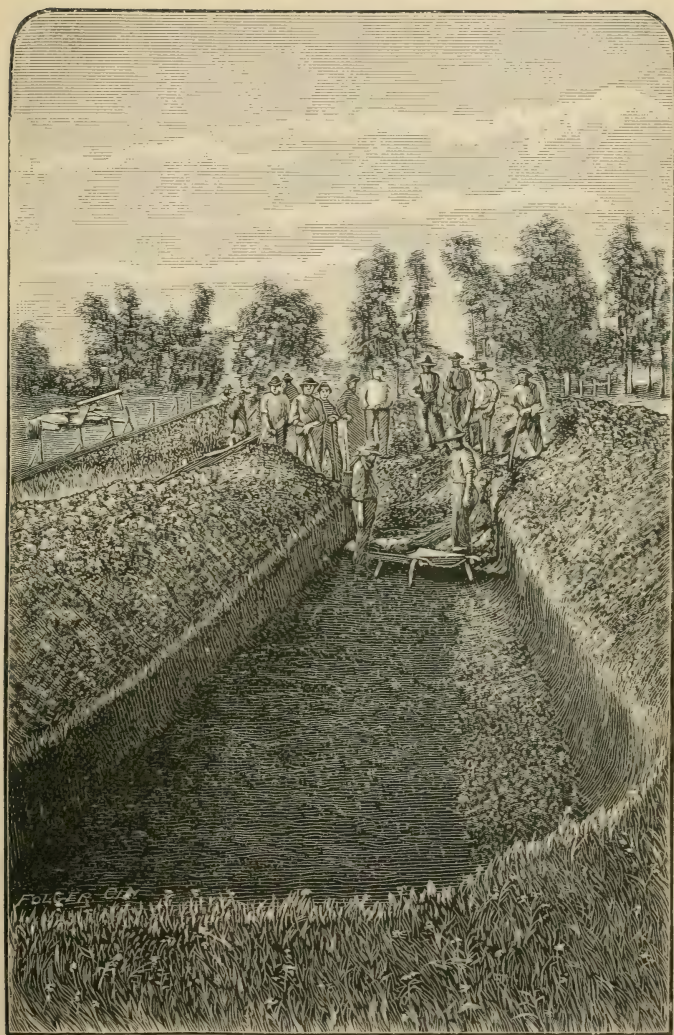
In the early morning the dead-cart came for the bodies; this was an army wagon, without covering, drawn by four mules, and driven by a slave. The bodies were tossed into the cart, without regard to regularity or decency, being thrown upon one another as logs or sticks are packed into a pile. In this manner, with their arms and legs hanging over the sides, and their heads jostling and beating against each other, as the sable driver, whistling a merry strain, hauled them to the grave, hurrying rapidly over roots and stumps, the Federal prisoners were carried out to the burial.

The cemetery was located north-west of the stockade, and nearly a mile from the hospital, upon a beautiful open spot, surrounded by the forest of pines, and slightly sloping toward the north-east. The dead were buried by a squad of paroled prisoners, selected for this purpose; a trench, running due north and south, was dug about four feet in depth, six feet wide, and of sufficient length to contain the bodies for the day. In this the bodies were placed side by side, with their heads to the east, and the earth thrown in upon them. A little mound, a foot in height, was raised over each body; a stake, branded with the number on the label, placed at the head of each, and without a prayer said over the dead, without a tear from the strangers that performed the last rite, the ceremony was ended. The number upon the stake referred to a register, kept in the office of the chief surgeon, by Mr. Dorrence Atwater, a paroled prisoner, in which were the number, name, rank, company, regiment (when these were known), date of death, and name of disease. This register was kept with great care, and if it is still in existence\* will correctly refer the inquiring friend to the spot where the loved one lies. But some of those who died in the stockade expired without revealing their name; of such

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\* Mr. Atwater succeeded in preserving a copy of this register, which is now on file among the papers of the War Department at Washington.





MODE OF INTERMENT AT ANDERSONVILLE.



only the number is recorded, and the little word, "unknown," comprises all that is left of many a brave man's history.

There were three men at Andersonville, in authority over the prisoners, upon whom the major part of the crimes committed there must rest; these were Sergeant Smith, General Winder, and Captain Wirz; and however much infamy belongs to Jefferson Davis, for permitting atrocities, of which he must have been fully cognizant, and which were done without his disapproval, if not with his sanction, since a word from him would have prevented their being practiced—to these men, and especially to Captain Wirz, who devised and carried out the details of the brutal crimes, history will attach an odium and a disgrace that will last forever.

Of Smith little need be said; he was to Captain Wirz what Sikes was to Fagin, the Jew—a tool that could please his master best by the meanest actions; who delighted in nothing so much as in putting irons upon brave men in his power, and in mocking their tortures by his horrid oaths and ribaldry. It is not worth while to attempt to elevate him to an infamy of fame; he was a puerile instrument in the hands of an unscrupulous villain, and in his corruption let him wallow without further notice.

General Winder was connected with Andersonville in the capacity of commissary-general of prisons. To him belongs the guilt of permitting the prisoners to starve and rot in filthy dens, under his own eye, and with his sanction, not only at Andersonville, where his headquarters were established, but at twelve other places, where the captives were confined. His character was that of a ruffian, viewed in whatever light it is placed; he witnessed and understood the infernal practices of the men who had the prison interiors in charge, and it was in his power to prevent them; he knew the paucity and the quality of the rations, and he could have increased and improved them; he had cognizance of the fact that the guard fired recklessly upon the prisoners, killing and

maiming them unnecessarily, and he praised them for their prowess. If the Confederate government was too poor to permit him to purchase medicines for the sick, he could have allowed the healthy men to protect themselves against the climate, by building huts within the inclosure, whereby more than fifty per cent of the sickness would have been prevented. In short, he had supreme and absolute control of the prison, and if his subordinates failed to practice the ordinary traits of humanity, of their own accord, it was in his power to compel them to do it. But such was evidently not his desire; his whole career at Andersonville indicated that the results before him were such as he had planned, and he seemed to pride himself that he alone and unaided was successful in exterminating the enemies he hated with his whole soul and strength with greater rapidity than the generals who had command of large armies at the front. By his directions, the wounded captured from Sherman's army were brought to this place, where he knew infection and death were sure to follow. The positions of quartermaster and sutler were held by members of his family; the spoils taken from prisoners were appropriated by them and Captain Wirz. Gold and silver watches, jewelry, treasury notes, every thing of value which the men possessed, and which, if they could have retained, or drawn upon through the sutler, would have saved many lives, were distributed among his friends or stored up for future use. His only hope of ending the war seemed to be in slaying and disabling his enemies, and in this respect he met with what, to him, seemed most gratifying results. Like the Tartar emperor, he gloried in seating himself upon a pyramid formed by the skulls of his foes; but unlike him, he lacked the mercy to slay them outright with the sword, and preferred to witness their agony, to hear their groans, as they slowly wasted into the grave, by famine and disease.

Captain Wirz was of an exceedingly tyrannical disposition, and naturally a coward—coarse, brutal, intolerant, and vain. Such a man, without sympathies with the



woes of humanity, and with a positive love for the exhibition of torture, when he could be placed beyond the reach of retaliation for his cruelties, was the most appropriate selection the Confederate authorities could have made for the fell purpose they had in view. He



was unscrupulous in the exercise of his authority, which seemed to be unlimited, excessively cruel in the punishment of light offenses, indifferent to the horrors by which he was surrounded, and apparently happiest when the misery of the prisoners was greatest. He was by nature fitted to become distinguished only in the infliction of suffering, and, during the entire time he was in charge of Andersonville stockade, was never known to relent or manifest the smallest symptom of pity or commiseration for the helpless men consigned to his care. He was profane, obscene, mean-spirited, and ferocious. In history he must rank with Nero for cruelty, with Robespierre for wanton butchery, with the Spanish inquisitor for fiendish cunning in the invention of torments; without, however, the genius which threw a cloak of respectability over the infamy of those scourges of mankind. In consequence of the lack of the ordinary traits of humanity, this human blood-hound resembled more the blood-thirsty savage than any character in modern history. If he still lives,\* no remorse of conscience will affect him, no upbraidings of his fellow men disturb him; nothing, in short, will ever touch his heart save the lash he so brutally inflicted upon the helpless men in his power, or the severer punishments he caused them to suffer.

Certain orders and forms were necessary to preserve quiet and order among thirty thousand prisoners; but in most instances ordinary police regulations would have


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\* See p. 395.

been sufficient for this purpose. Had the prisoners at Andersonville been treated like human beings, been properly fed and protected against the climate, they would have conducted themselves in such manner as to avoid the necessity of punishment. For the lack of rations, Captain Wirz was not responsible; but in his position, with almost absolute authority, he could have done much to alleviate suffering, if he could not remove it entirely. Had he been a man of spirit, of humanity, of honor, he would have resigned his commission rather than have remained an instrument of torture in that den of wretchedness. In whatever light his conduct is viewed, it has no palliating circumstance. Judging his motives by his actions, the candid inquirer will ever reach the same general conclusion: that he was a moral monster—a hideous abortion of nature, devoid alike of humanity and honor, and lustful of blood, whose instincts led him to revel in horrors, whose ear was charmed with the groans of famishing men, whose insatiable appetite craved misery and wretchedness, as its natural aliment, and turned yet hungry away from the abundant supply here afforded it.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

ATLANTA TAKEN BY SHERMAN—ORDER OF GENERAL WINDER THAT 20,000 PRISONERS ARE TO BE EXCHANGED—ESCAPE OF THE AUTHOR WITH TWO COMRADES—AVOIDING THE DOGS—ENCOUNTER HOOD'S SCOUTS—HAIR-BREADTH ESCAPES—IN THE MIDST OF HOOD'S ARMY—SURROUNDED AND RECAPTURED.

AILY Macon and Atlanta papers were received at the surgeon's head-quarters, containing extended accounts of the successes of the rebels in resisting the march of the veteran army of Sherman into the interior of Georgia. They all advocated the policy of allowing Sherman to advance far from his base of supplies without opposition, even to the taking of Atlanta, if necessary; when, by a combined attack upon his rear, his communications could be cut, and his gallant army forced to retreat through the enemy's country. The rebel generals, however, rejected the advice of the editors, and in a few days we heard of a glorious victory in front of the city, in which 4,000 Yankees were taken prisoners; and a short time after came the news that Sherman was so crippled that the Confederate forces had fallen back upon the Chattahoochie, leaving all their mounted guns as a present to the vanquished foe, and that orders from Sherman had been found commanding that, owing to the *temporary* scarcity of provisions, only half rations should be issued to his men. Scarcely had the cheers which greeted these tidings of great joy to the Georgia militia on duty at Andersonville died away, before a negro reported to the clerks that General Winder had just received a dispatch announcing that Sherman's whole army had occupied Atlanta—Hood barely escaping capture, with all his

command. Atlanta, the heroic city, whose inhabitants to a man had sworn to die before surrendering their town to the plundering Yankees; Atlanta, the great, the powerful and—the gasconading—had fallen, and its citizens were not all sacrificed! Indeed, in a few days the Macon papers were so far convinced that it would be useless to resist the victorious arms of General Sherman, that they advised the citizens of that city to remain quietly at their homes and offer no opposition to the conqueror.

Two weeks had elapsed since the last medicines in the dispensary had been issued, and the sufferings of the prisoners had increased with frightful rapidity. It was evident that something had occurred to disturb the regular supply of rations as well as of medicines, and our faithful negro soon informed us that it was believed at Winder's headquarters that the objective point of Sherman's advance was Andersonville, and that our security was seriously threatened. We were not surprised to receive, after dark on the 6th of September, an order from General Winder that there was to be an immediate exchange of 20,000 men, and that Savannah and Charleston were the points at which the exchange was to be effected. This news was at once conveyed to the prisoners within the stockade (who at this time were ignorant of the capture of Atlanta), with orders to be ready to start next morning in detachments. The intelligence was greeted with cheer upon cheer by the famished men, and the air was rent with the noisy expressions of joy at their speedy deliverance. The clerks, who had better sources of information than the prisoners in the stockade, did not, however, credit the proposed exchange, but saw in it only a *ruse* to induce the men to submit quietly to a removal to some place of greater security. On the morning of the 7th a train load started, followed by another at noon of the same day, and two more on the next. The clerks reported as usual at the sick-call, but had nothing to do, for lack of medicines. In passing back to my quarters near the dispensary, I sat down as the long file of wretched prisoners limped slowly on toward the railroad station, and the misery here seen



presented forcibly to my mind the gloomy fate in store for us.

As before stated, I did not believe this to be a movement for exchange, and the foreboding of another terrible winter in some desolate field or filthy warehouse added tenfold intensity to the dreary prospect. While reflecting upon the probable fortune of these men, a clerk came up to me with the intelligence that all the clerks must go on the noon train (on the 8th) or return to the prison. I came to an immediate decision as to the line of conduct I should pursue. I had considered for the last two months a plan of escape, which I had confided to three only of the fourteen that constituted our mess. With two of these—Hudson, of a Maryland regiment, and Beach, of the 21st Wisconsin—I had conversed quite freely, and with them the plan, or rather, the chance of success, had been fully discussed. Some time previous to this, we had decided to escape, unless relief came to our aid, but had deferred the attempt from time to time in the hope of exchange. Hastening to them, I urged that now, while the excitement attendant upon the removal lasted, was the most favorable opportunity for our project. Every day we waited lessened our chances of “living upon the country,” without visiting the houses on our route. We had to consider that we were breaking our parole; that disappointment had attended most of those who had made the attempt; that if it were suspected we had tried to escape, the terrible dogs would be set upon our track and would surely overtake us. We were not skilled in casuistry, but it seemed to us that it was right to adopt any means in our power to escape the tortures of another winter in the hells in which we were kept, even though they involved the breaking of our paroles. It was simply a case of self-preservation, and we certainly felt no compunctions in acting upon this, the first law of nature. The only consequences we dreaded were those sure to follow upon recapture, and we knew full well what these would be. As we must risk our lives equally if we remained or ran away, we came to the conclusion to avail ourselves of the

present opportunity, and accordingly made our few preparations without a moment's delay. Some time before, I had accidentally found a small piece of a map of the States of Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee. It was less than five inches square, but gave the location of the rivers, railroads, and towns, from Nashville to Chattanooga and Atlanta, cutting off half the last name; thence it was burned in a sort of semicircle, below Andersonville to Americus, Am being all of that word left; thence it was torn across the State of Alabama to Corinth, Miss., and round to Nashville again. It had been in the possession of one of the guards, who had thrown it into the fire, and I had picked it up from among the ashes. It seemed as if Providence had preserved it for our party. Mr. Hudson, while on duty, had seen a compass upon the desk in the chief surgeon's office. It was about three inches in diameter, and was inclosed in a strong box. This he had secured, and, with my help, secreted beyond the reach of discovery. We had expected that it would be missed, and, of course, that the clerks would be suspected of stealing it; but, by good fortune, its loss was either unnoticed or it was considered of too little consequence to be sought for. The compass and map were now invaluable accessories to our scheme.

We determined to start directly after dinner, and with that view, arranged our little affairs with one of our friends, I. P. Tedrow, a sergeant of the 89th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, that in case we were never heard from, our friends at home would know that we had made one effort to regain our freedom. Our usual dinner of black peas was already over the fire, but, when cooked, we were too much excited to eat. The fearful hazard we were about to make created a feeling of uneasiness, which we could with difficulty conceal. It was now our great object to secure as much corn bread as we could conveniently bestow in our haversacks, and convey it into the swamp, without exciting the suspicion of our own "boys," of the surgeons, and the military detectives, that were constantly on the alert for such cases. By closely watching our op-

portunities, we succeeded, one by one, in conveying our things, wrapped in old shirts, into a place of safety. To provide against the pursuit of the dogs, we had agreed with one of our friends, that in case any inquiry was made for us, he should report us as having gone on the train to Charleston, in accordance with General Winder's order. Unless some one escaped from the stockade, in all probability the hounds would not be let loose, and we hoped to avoid them altogether.

The day before we started, I held a conversation with a man who had formerly been the cook for our mess. He had taken great pains to gain, from the guards and from private, personal explorations, a considerable knowledge of the nature of the country round about, and had even passed beyond the picket lines in a suit of gray cloth, which he had in some way procured. From this man, I obtained some valuable information of the nature of the swamp and the best route across it, together with a correct notion of the situation of the scouts and pickets without the prison. Our map had been very carefully studied, until we were familiar with all the points of importance on the line of our proposed route, their location and general direction, as well as an approximation to their real distances from each other. I was perfectly familiar with the most approved methods of finding the north star, even in partially cloudy nights, and had practiced running lines with the compass several years before, while at school. The knowledge then acquired was still fresh in my memory, and we felt sure that, if we were once fairly on our way, we should reach our lines successfully.

At the time appointed, we bade farewell to the hospital and dispensary, and pushed into the swamp, feeling our way carefully from bog to bog, until we were quite out of sight of the building. It was the first time we had attempted to cross the swamp, and we found the undertaking much more difficult than we had anticipated, sinking sometimes to the waist in the quagmires that secretly lay in wait for us. By dint of much struggling and pulling, we succeeded after a time in reaching solid land. We



came out on a steep bank, where the small-pox hospital had been located, and keeping as near the earth as we could and make any progress, we moved forward through the underbrush, briars, and thickets, until we reached a high, rolling piece of ground, partly cleared. Our route had thus far been in a south-easterly direction, and as we looked back toward the north-west, the sight of the stockade and its swarming inmates caused a deep shudder to thrill our frames. We were bidding, as we hoped, an eternal farewell to its horrors, but a sense of commiseration for the sufferers left behind excited a strong desire for vengeance against the villainous perpetrators of so many crimes against humanity; and we there solemnly vowed, if ever we reached our homes in safety, to do all in our power to spread a knowledge of the terrible scenes here enacted over the whole land, and arouse, if possible, our government to take measures of retaliation upon a barbarous enemy that could carry on such a system of cruelty.

No time was to be lost, however, for it was necessary to put as many miles between us and the stockade before sunset as possible, in case the dogs should follow us. Changing our course due south, and traveling in the woods to avoid observation, we passed on till we came to a large field of corn. This obstruction caused us to bend to the right, keeping well in the bushes, when we were startled by the sound of human voices. Peering cautiously through the leaves, we discovered a dwelling-house not more than a hundred yards distant, from which the voices that had alarmed us proceeded. It was a man and his children at play; fortunately they had not seen us, but the timely discovery made us draw back hastily into a deeper thicket and consider the situation. This obstacle directly in our front compelled a retreat, which was effected in good order, when we flanked the house upon the left, proceeding with great caution, lest our blue uniforms should betray us. Exerting our powers of locomotion to the utmost, we were soon beyond the reach of this danger, only to expose ourselves to still another; for scarcely had



we passed out of sight of the house, when we were confronted by a large plantation of corn fields and open land. This was a greater impediment than the other; the negro huts and the dwelling of the master were in plain sight, a half a mile or so to our left; we could cross these fields only with great risk in the daylight, and to remain where we were involved an equal hazard. It seemed imperative that we should continue to advance, and so we scaled the rail fence and crossed the field as rapidly as we could, keeping near the ground to avoid observation, and anticipating that at least a dozen men were on every row of the corn field watching all our movements with keen eyes; and though every alternate row was planted with peanuts, which grow in this climate in great abundance, we did not stop to examine or gather the tempting fruit, but hastened on with all our speed toward the timber, which we gained in safety. The heat was terrific, and when we reached the shade of the pine forest our clothes were completely saturated with perspiration; but we esteemed this as light when compared with another winter in a rebel prison, and we hurried forward through the woods till we arrived at what appeared to us a lower open country, when we changed our course by the compass to the south-west, leaving a planter's house and hundreds of acres of corn in plain view.

In passing over a hill covered with scrub oak, we crossed numerous well-traveled paths, in whose sand we found many human foot-prints, looking fresh, as if they had just been made. We were careful to leave no trace of our feet, and concealed ourselves as much as possible from sight by taking advantage of every bush, and scrutinizing every open spot before passing over it. The woods were very open, which characteristic of all Southern timber lands through which we passed, was undoubtedly of advantage to teams for purposes of transit, but it seemed superfluous to us in our business. Plantation roads now began to appear, traversing the woods in various directions, before crossing which we made careful reconnoissance, listening attentively to any sounds that we might hear. Growing

bolder as we advanced, we pressed on through fields and orchards, pastures and meadow lands, until we came to a piece of timber, through which a deep, dry ravine led in the direction we wished to follow; pursuing this, we were almost shrouded in darkness, though in the open spaces without the sun was still shining. At last, emerging from the woods, there appeared directly in front of us what seemed to be a sheet of water. Bearing off to the left, we found ourselves in the midst of another swamp. This was a piece of good fortune, for while we were in the swamps we felt sure that our track could not be followed by the dogs—a fallacy, as we afterward learned—and here also we were less liable to be discovered, as few persons, unless driven hither for purposes of concealment, would venture into it. A sluggish stream ran through the swamp, but the water was so low that many fallen logs bridged it, though they were yet covered with mud and slime. Breaking some large sticks from the shrubs that grew here, we felt our way with them, over the logs and bits of timber, for what appeared to us the distance of a mile or more. About sundown we heard the terrible yelp of the hounds; we started as if the fiends of hell were upon our track; in an instant the awful punishments we had seen inflicted upon “runaways” flashed upon our remembrance, and we imagined ourselves bitten and torn by these ferocious beasts, returned to Andersonville, standing in the stocks and exposed to the gibes and leering mockery of Captain Wirz, as he laughed in glee over the unsuccessful termination of our adventure. Back into the swamp we hurried, to conceal in its bogs and fens the scent of our footsteps, seeking that sympathy with the filthy reptiles that inhabit those horrid sloughs which civilized man denied us. Here we waited, anxiously listening to the howling of the dogs, till it died away in the distance, when we knew that either they were not on our track or that they had lost it. Just as the sun was setting, we emerged from our hiding place, and advancing rapidly to make up the time we had lost, we found ourselves on the edge of another swamp, by the side of which was a field of sorghum,

in which was some one moving about. Peering in among the stalks, we saw several negroes still at labor, and the plantation dogs were running and barking about the field. Fearing immediate discovery, we beat a hasty retreat to the swamp, and plunged through it with all the speed we could, stumbling over bogs and decaying wood, sometimes sinking to our waists in the soft mud, and sometimes falling headlong over prostrate logs, or getting entangled among the tall, coarse grass which grew in various places around us. Leg-weary and faint from our long and difficult journey, and foot-sore and hungry, we finally reached dry land again, near an extensive field of corn, through which we skulked rapidly to a piece of woods directly in our course. Supposing ourselves completely out of danger for the night, we hurried forward through the thickets, when we discovered but a few rods ahead of us some twenty negro huts, completely surrounded by the woods. The voices of the negroes came distinctly to our ears as we stood watching them at their work. Flanking this place by a circuit of a mile or more, we came upon a small village on the railroad that leads south from Andersonville, and we supposed that we were near Americus. The railroad at this point ran through a deep cut, just in the edge of a piece of timber; the excavated earth had been thrown up on the side toward us, forming a sort of high breast-work, up which we crawled to reconnoiter the position. Just across the railroad was a plantation, or rather a large cleared field, over which a white man was driving some cattle. We were secure from observation from him at least; but if he had seen us, he would no doubt have been much alarmed, for the people of this part of Georgia have a great dread of the "infernal Yanks," whether armed or unarmed.

We now reached a place where it was necessary to halt until after dark, for it would be impossible to cross the open space before us in daylight, so we crawled carefully back into the thicket, and waited patiently for night's curtain to fall. While remaining here, the locomotive whistle sounded, and presently the cars came thundering past,



showing us that we were much nearer Andersonville than we had hoped. Soon after the train passed us, although it was not dark enough for absolute safety, we ventured on again. Finding an easy place to cross the deep cut, we clambered down to the track, where Hudson discovered a post, which told us, much to our disappointment, that we were just four and a half miles south of Andersonville station. We had thus traveled in a circuit of some twelve or fifteen miles, and had made an absolute distance of four and a half. But one thing we felt quite sure of, namely, if we were pursued by the dogs, they would be obliged to follow us over every rod of ground we had traversed, and we were at least twelve miles ahead of them, even if we had come out at Andersonville station itself.

Before crossing the railroad, we had determined upon the course we would take, and had now a long night before us. We should have no more doubling back upon our course to avoid houses and the human face, which was more to be dreaded than wild beasts. Henceforth, our line of march was straight forward, for by traveling all this night we could place so great a distance between ourselves and Andersonville as to preclude the possibility of pursuit by the dogs—another fallacy learned by experience. The plan we had marked out was to travel due west, cross the Chattahoochie, and proceed beyond it some twenty-five miles; then, making a right angle, to turn due north, until beyond Columbus and West Point—both places some seventy-five or a hundred miles north-west of Andersonville. Being safely past those points, to take a north-easterly direction, and strike the railroad some where in the vicinity of Marietta, which we knew to be then in our possession. We concluded that Sherman would follow up his recent success, using Atlanta as a new base, threaten Columbus and West Point with his right, Macon with his center, and Augusta with his left; and that in all probability there would be a considerable Confederate force both at West Point and Columbus, which it would be convenient and proper for us to avoid,



if possible. Hence, we deemed it the best policy to steer clear of those two points, and, although it would involve a great deal of traveling, to make our way up through Alabama. So, with the compass in hand, we took a course due westward, striking into a beautiful woodland, where the ground was clear of sticks and logs. It was smooth, and covered with a thick carpet of grass, which rendered the walking both pleasant and easy, while here and there the roads leading to the interior plantations passed beneath a vault of green foliage, and looked very alluring to us, but we knew they must be avoided for the sake of our safety.

This pleasant scene soon ended, and, judging from the appearance of the region ahead of us, that it was another of those low swampy tracts which abound in this part of Georgia, we determined to bear a few degrees to the northwest, to avoid it. Picking our ground, as we thought to the best advantage, we stumbled into the edge of a black alder swamp, so thick that we could with the greatest difficulty force ourselves through it. Patiently pushing on, after incredible exertion, we reached a piece of timber, and presently came to a ravine, which was followed some distance; but when it turned from our course we abandoned it, ascended its steep sides, and found ourselves on the summit of a hill, from which as well as we could discern in the darkness, a tract of cleared land reached for considerable distance. We mounted a "stake and rider" fence, with the intention of crossing this space, when our ears were beset by a fearful yell, which shook us from head to foot. It seemed to proceed out of the earth at our feet, and echoed and re-echoed from the forest we had just left behind. We thought for a moment we had reached the far-famed



“jumping off” place, and had jumped, and here were the ushers to announce the arrival of, etc., to his majesty, the patron saint of—Andersonville. Interpreting his “by your leave” in our own way, we scaled the high fence in a twinkling, and waited the result. We had been so long away from the army we no longer recognized the once-familiar bray of the mule. Fearful that there might be a herd of these indocile animals in the pasture, and that they might charge our lines to our disadvantage if we again invaded their territory, we concluded to pass around their dominions, and leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of their vocal entertainment. Making all haste in our power, we soon came to a plantation road, upon which a cart, driven by an old negro, was hurrying along with a furious noise, accompanied by a dog baying loudly. The buildings of the plantation soon hove in sight, which, from the sounds issuing from them, we concluded were occupied by negroes, cows, hogs, dogs, cats, and mules. The effect of this strange medley upon us was, for a moment, to silence our fears, and we forgot that we were fugitives from an oppression worse than that which held these chattels, human and otherwise, in bondage. The old thought that we were not yet free men soon came back to us, and with stout hearts we again took up our line of march.

During the early part of the evening, our way led through the darkness and solitude of the woods, where we were exposed to the attacks of brush, sharp-pointed sticks and twigs, which constantly “punched” us in the side, face, and eyes. This was a serious annoyance, but we pushed on with little attention to it, knowing well that our journey was no pleasure trip. After the “shades of night” had sufficiently deepened to bring out the light of the moon, we had the pleasure of its company. It being the early part of the month, we had calculated upon its aid in our night wanderings, and were not deceived. Its rays aided us materially in avoiding the natural obstructions in our path. At about one o’clock, we came upon a road, which by the compass seemed to run in the direction we

wished to take. Following this, we found we could more than double the distance in the same time, besides resting ourselves from the intolerable annoyance of the limbs and twigs of the timber. Upon all roads we marched at intervals of about eight rods from each other, in order, in case of alarm, that sufficient notice might be given to enable the two in the rear at least to escape. We had followed this road for a short distance, when the man in front discovered a bright light directly before us, which we supposed to be the camp-fire of "scouts," who were stationed on all the principal roads at the distance of some fifteen miles from Andersonville to intercept such adventurers as ourselves. We moved cautiously up in the shade of the fence, until within earshot of the light, and listened. A series of loud groans reached our ears, and we concluded that some one had incautiously approached too near, and been fired upon and wounded by the picket. Satisfying ourselves that the sounds proceeded from a fork of the roads, one of which ran north from that point, we carefully retraced our steps, and when at a sufficient distance to avoid observation from any who might be stationed near the light, we leaped the fence into a large corn field, and proceeded rapidly and noiselessly in a north-west direction, so as to strike the imagined north and south road. Passing out of the corn field into a large patch of sweet potatoes and sugar cane, yet unripe and unfit for eating (the season seemed to have been very backward here), we reached the road, as we expected, and proceeded northward upon it. Several dwellings, with the lights still burning, were passed, and large, savage dogs flew out at us with loud yells, as if with the intention of devouring us on the spot.

This road was leading us too far north for our purpose, and we accordingly abandoned it after proceeding a short distance. Striking off into the woods in a westerly course, we came to one of the numerous plantation roads, which in this part of the South lead in various directions to the "inland" plantations, and followed it for some distance, it being in our course; but, conceiving that we were going



too far west, we once more left the beaten track, and plunged rapidly through the woods, receiving the usual salutations in our faces and eyes from the low brush, until we again struck a road, this time a main avenue of travel, leading north-west. It was sandy and dry, and we continued upon it for a long distance, walking in the ruts, in our usual file.

Light soon began to break; the crowing of the cocks announced that it was time to cast about for some place of security and rest for the ensuing day. Traveling as late as we dared without risk of being seen, we filed off into a large body of timber lying west of the road, where we established our head-quarters beneath a group of thick scrub oak. We had been upon the road about eighteen hours, with no rest, no halt, except for a few minutes before sunset, when we had reached the railroad near Andersonville, and were weary, faint, and hungry. Our entire commissary contained only a pint of salt and four pounds of corn bread, we having found nothing but raw corn, in the way of edibles, upon our route. Having made a light breakfast upon a part of the bread, we subdued our longing for more as best we could. We had determined before setting out, in no case to approach a house, as nearly every man who had been fortunate enough to get beyond the scouts and pickets, had been decoyed and retaken while stopping for the purpose of obtaining food; we, therefore, knew that there was nothing more for us to eat until we found it upon our next night's march. We slept lightly till ten o'clock in the morning, catching every rustle of the leaves and breaking of the twigs, and starting up with our imaginations full of sudden capture and fierce bloodhounds. We found, on waking, that we were quite near the road, much nearer than we considered compatible with safety, and moved to what seemed a more secure spot, farther back in the woods, where we soon discovered, much to our disappointment, that we were in close proximity to a large house and another highway; and that the road must be crossed in plain view of the house. We skulked across quickly, and took up a new position beneath the friendly



shade of a clump of scrub oak. We had remained here but a very short time, before we heard a man pounding, as if splitting shingles or staves, not more than thirty yards distant from us. This was new cause of uneasiness, and we were compelled to retire still farther back into the woods, where we lay undisturbed until sunset. We congratulated ourselves upon our success thus far; we had taken every precaution against all the difficulties we could foresee, and had, in many instances, had cause to test the usefulness of our little sagacity. But we were especially satisfied with our escape from the blood-hounds, for we felt sure that they could not track us to this point. Our travels in the swamps would tend to throw them off the scent; besides this, we had walked in the rut in the main road, in order that the wheels of the first vehicles which might pass in that direction, might obliterate the scent of our footsteps. We were now at least twenty-five miles from the prison, and, if the dogs had not been started, we had full thirty hours the advance, with another long night to march in.

In our last night's expedition, through swamps, rivers, and briers, we had obtained sufficient experience to give us an idea of the magnitude of the undertaking before us. We determined, therefore, to shape our course for the future in such a direction that, while we were secure from the enemy (we considered no one our friend), we should also save all the distance possible. To follow out our original plan, and pass due west, twenty-five miles beyond the Chattahoochie, would require many a weary mile of unnecessary traveling. During the afternoon the map was re-examined, when it was found that, by taking a north-westerly course, until within twenty-five or thirty miles of Columbus, thence north, across the Fort Valley Railroad, to Newnan, a small town, forty miles from Atlanta, on the West Point and Atlanta Railroad, we should save about a hundred miles—a matter of no small consideration in our then condition—and we determined to modify our original design, so as to adapt it to this new route. We thus defi-

nitely settled upon our next two weeks' campaign, and trusted to its successful execution to develop the proper course to be followed afterward.

The locusts, which abound in great numbers in this region, set up their shrill piping just about sunset, making the whole woods ring with their notes; and the commencement of their song was agreed upon as our signal for moving forward. The exact course by the compass was laid out, from which we never departed materially, lest in the darkness we should lose our latitude and longitude. Crawling from our hiding place, and having carefully reconnoitered our position, to be sure we were not noticed by any one, we commenced our long, weary night's march. A mile's walk brought us out of the woods, past a large plantation, to a stream meandering through a field of corn, where we slaked our thirst (we had been without water all day) and partook of some refreshment in the way of cold corn bread. Having finished our repast and bathed our hands and faces, we pushed on with all possible speed over the broken-down corn stalks and the ridges of the field into a piece of timber, through which we marched hastily, emerging at length point blank upon a large mansion, situated just out of the woods. Making a short detour around the building, we reached the road, but had scarcely reached it when we heard the light gallop of a horse just around a bend, and concealed from us by the bushes, but apparently coming with great speed upon us. We scarcely touched the high rail fence in leaping over it, and hardly dared to breathe until we were secreted in a friendly cane field, and the horse and his rider had passed quite out of hearing. Fortune had favored us by this alarm, for, thinking it unsafe to return to the road, we continued on in the cane field, and had proceeded but a short distance when we discovered a melon patch, in which a few melons had been left ungathered. We made no scruple in helping ourselves to such of them as suited our purpose, and sat down upon the ground to enjoy the luscious fruit. But our enjoyment was soon interrupted. A fleet horseman passed up the road, apparently on the

search for us, trying, as we thought, to head off our course; when, in a few minutes after he had gone, a little to our right, and in the direction in which he had come, a long blast upon a horn was heard, calling together a pack of dogs, which immediately set up that familiar but none the less horrible yell that had filled our imagination with so much dread for the last day and night. Our blood seemed to curdle in our veins, as we lay flat upon the ground listening to those fearful sounds, expecting momentarily to be seized and returned to our prison. But fortune again favored us. The sounds of the galloping horse grew fainter and fainter, and the deep bay of the dogs died away in the distance.

Drawing a long breath of relief, we rose to our feet and went forward. Presently we came to a rice field, the first we had met with, and as we waded through the tall, dense growth, wet with the heavy dew, our clothing was saturated higher than our waists. We then crossed an extensive corn field, dragging ourselves wearily over the high ridges, while the heavy growth of the stalks constantly thrust itself in our faces. The air was filled with the shrill tones of the locusts and the merry voices of the negroes, who had just returned from labor, and were relieving themselves after their toil by singing, dancing, and lively chattering. Until nine o'clock, we could easily locate the plantation buildings by the noise these negroes made. After that time, silence, unbroken except by the barking of the dreadful blood-hounds, prevailed. We came out into a large pasture, in which, at the foot of a hill, stood a house, when we were again beset by a ferocious hound, that obliged us to turn off into a pine forest, so dense that the moon could not penetrate it with its rays. Forward, through ravines reeking with moisture and poisonous vapors; over hills, where the loose stones rolled back as we trod upon them, and tripped us bruised to the ground; through pine forests, where the thick darkness became visible and the silence so profound that the faintest rustle of the leaves was painfully loud; forward, scratched and torn by the pointed sticks, with



bleeding hands and limbs, into the long fields of corn, stretching far away in the distance, and looking in the silvery light of the moon like vast lakes; forward, many miles of weary marching on the furrowed ground, with nothing to break the settled monotony except an occasional fence, over which we clambered in haste, lest some keen-eyed watcher might observe us and send us back to the tortures we had left—until it seemed as if the earth had become one vast granary, and we were lost in it. Still forward; out at last upon the broad highway, wandering among its deflections, now right, now left, over bridged streams and through marshes; stopping where the warp and woof in this intricate net of roads crossed each other, to examine the direction of each by the compass, and select our proper course; forward, past the costly mansions of the masters, the hovels of the slaves, protected alike in their slumbers by the “deep-mouthed hound;” through villages, where countless curs followed us with vulgar cries, strangely contrasted with the louder tones of their royal brothers; forward, cringing and cowering, like criminals whom justice, yet unappeased, pursues with tireless feet, glancing anxiously around, our hearts startled into a more rapid beating by the shadows upon the doors and the moaning of the wind through the pines near by on either side. In a shed by the roadside, a man with a lantern was seeking something, what we did not stop to learn. He turned the full blaze of his lantern upon us as we passed lightly by, but he did not see us, and we sped on. Two men were heard talking in the road just before us, approaching nearer and nearer, as we knew by their tones. Bounding noiselessly over the fence, we lay with bated breath in a friendly corner until their voices were lost in the distance, when we resumed our monotonous tramp. Tramp, tramp, with weary feet, forward for liberty, skulking over fences to avoid the noisy rebuffs of the dogs, and back again when we had reached a safe distance beyond them; into orchards, in vain pursuit of the fruits that had long been gathered; through more corn fields, where we plucked the large yellow



spikes, and ground them with our teeth to silence the hunger within us; confronted by other dogs, that chased us in double-quick from the vicinity of dwellings which had been unrevealed or too late discovered for safety but for them. Tramp, tramp, now leaving the highway, because the light began to break in the far-off east, admonishing us that we must seek a hiding place for the day, where the unfriendly eyes of man would not find us; in the woods, over logs and through thickets, more and more scratched and torn and bleeding, yet still forward. We traced a little stream to a spring, its source, hoping to find security near the living waters; but too many footpaths converged here for perfect concealment, and we hastened off, far into the dense forest, where the disturbing foot of man would be less likely to come. And here we threw ourselves upon the bosom of our common mother and sought rest. Remaining until noon, one of our number set out in search of water. Making discovery of a swamp a short distance in our rear, he returned to conduct us to it. Bending low upon our faces, we slaked our burning thirst from the bogs, and, lying down again, slept.

When we awoke, the rain was pouring down in torrents; but it soon cleared off, leaving us, strange as it may seem, greatly refreshed. We made a hasty meal of raw corn, moistened by water from the swamp, and marked out our course for the coming night. The locusts commenced their evening concert, announcing that it was time for us to begin our journey. Our path was due north, and led us through woods and fields, through swamps, and over ridges. The high rolling lands seemed to lay in beds, with a ravine upon one side and a swamp upon the other. On these rich lands we usually found several melon patches, upon which enough of the fruit was left ungathered to satisfy our wants, and we did not hesitate in appropriating it. Traveling on in this manner, without incident or adventure, save being drenched with crossing through six swamps, and as many intervening fields, covered with high grass and weeds, and wet with the recent rain, we came to a region that seemed to be

low and level and to stretch far way in front and on our right. The night fog had settled heavily down upon it, giving it the appearance of a fertile tract, such as frequently occurs in the lower valley of the Mississippi. Having rested a few moments to take observations of our position, we pushed forward, and immediately encountered the tall, stubborn weeds of the low lands, through which we forced our way with extreme difficulty, they being strong, wet, and high above our heads. These overcome, after a painful and protracted struggle, we reached clear ground again, or rather another of those almost interminable corn fields. Field after field of the tall, white stalks, upon which the grain was still unpicked, succeeded each other for miles in one continuous line, interrupted only by an occasional swamp or ravine. Tired, at length, of the mud, we left the plowed ground and struck upon a pine ridge which promised better traveling. But we were disappointed in the change, for scarcely had we entered the pines when we began to descend a declivity, down which we handed ourselves, as it were, by hanging to the bushes. It seemed as if we were going down into the mouth of some bottomless pit, so profound was the darkness and so steep the descent. At the bottom we found another swamp. We were armed with heavy oak sticks, both to defend ourselves in case of sudden attack and to feel our way, when, as in the present case, the path was rough and uncertain. It was my turn to lead the advance, which I did, using my "stick" to probe the foundation at every step. At first the mud and water were shallow, but as we advanced, they became deeper and deeper; the prickly vines crossed and re-crossed each other in every conceivable shape, forming a complete network, through which, in the darkness, we found the utmost difficulty in forcing a passage; to this were added tall cane brakes and a species of palm, whose broad leaf closely resembled those used at the North for fans, and what with mud and water, vines, brakes, and palm, we found our enterprise any thing but a pleasure excursion.

By the feeble moonlight, the tall decayed trees could be

faintly traced upon the lighter background of the sky, standing farther and farther off in our front, and indicating that the morass continued in their direction as far as the eye could reach. Probing the foundation, we found our walking sticks could be buried vertically in the yielding mud. We had now struggled with all our might for an hour, and had made a distance of ten rods since entering the swamp. It was impossible to go any further in that direction, for at every step forward the ground grew more and more unfavorable. We already stood in the mire up to our knees, with every prospect of sinking still deeper if we attempted to advance. There was no alternative but to retrace our steps as rapidly as possible, and to change our line of advance to some other direction. Turning back, accordingly, we took a course along the left border of the swamp, which led us in a westerly direction, and pursued it for the small matter of twelve miles. It is not probable that the swamp extended that distance in a direct line; whether it did or did not, or even much further, we never knew—for to us, as we followed its outline in the darkness, it seemed like a monster star in form, with rays situated something like a mile apart; and, in our progress, we, for want of a knowledge of its true position, were obliged to trace each ray separately so as to keep near the main body and not lose our course.

We had encountered the swamp at about ten o'clock, and it was now two; we had thus far made no actual progress, and, halting for a few minutes to recover our breath, we prepared for another assault at a point which seemed to be easily carried. We successfully beat down the tall reeds which were placed as a close body of skirmishers upon the front, and sharply attacked the main works. But we were here met with a strong line of briers, so firmly interwoven that we were forced to retreat after each of us had been severely wounded. Satisfied that a close engagement was no longer practicable, we returned to our old tactics and proceeded to flank the enemy, which we did triumphantly just as morning began to dawn. We had traveled twenty miles, in the swamp and out, since



ten o'clock. It is needless to add that we were completely jaded; it was the hardest night's work upon our trip, for the bushes were wet with the heavy shower that fell in the early part of the evening, and when we struck a field, the mud adhered closely to our shoes, compelling us to carry a mass of earth, in addition to our own weight, that made it very tiresome, to say the least. We had not seen a road for the last twenty miles; and we began to feel apprehensive that we had become lost in a wilderness of morass and corn fields.

We sought the friendly shelter of a piece of timber which was situated upon a slight rise of ground, and from it we could overlook the monster swamp which had proved so inimical to our progress; when the consoling fact was revealed that, if we had turned a short distance to the right, on our first encountering it, instead of taking the left, we could easily have crossed without going much out of our course. In fact, we had struck it near its northern limit, and had passed almost around it in the darkness. So we betook ourselves to the wet leaves and waited patiently for the sun to rise and dry our clothes and our bed. Our larder contained the remains of the corn bread we had brought with us from the prison, but it was wet and sour; we made the most of it, however, rather than fast, and rested as best we might. During the day we were visited by a member of the porcine tribe, that grunted his "good morning" to us, and after a short inspection, departed with a satisfactory "all right." The voices of the blacks informed us that we were but a short distance from a dwelling, and soon we heard one of them praying a little distance off. These sounds admonished us that we must remain very quiet in our hiding place, which we did until night.

As usual, we had marked out our course for the night's march, and, when darkness came, we set out again, much refreshed from our fatigue, but nearly famished. The route lay through interminable corn fields, on each alternate row of which peas were growing. The growth of these was remarkable; nothing in the North, that we had



ever seen, equalled their luxuriance. It was impossible to believe that our scant rations of these two articles was caused by a scarcity, as we had been so often told at Andersonville; every plat of arable land, whether large or small, was carefully planted with these kinds of food. In all the lowlands through which we passed, we found a system of drainage. These drains, as nearly as we could judge in the darkness, were from ten to twelve feet in width, and from eight to ten in depth; where the land was very low, there would often be three or four of these drains in the distance of half a mile, running parallel with each other. In many of them the water was six feet in depth, while in others it was not more than eighteen or twenty inches. On either bank was a heavy growth of blackberry vines, forming a perfect hedge, sometimes growing over the ditch so as nearly to meet in the center. As our route lay in a direct line, we often found great difficulty in crossing these; the briers had to be pulled apart and trampled upon; the steep side of the ditch to be clambered down; the water to be waded through or swam over; and when the opposite side was reached, it could be climbed up only by pulling upon the vines growing there, while the darkness added greatly to the difficulties of the passage. The briers tore our clothing badly, and scratched our hands and faces, leaving wounds that did not heal for weeks. We had traveled but a short distance through the fields before we came to a well-trodden road, the first we had seen for nearly two days, which from its appearance of being much used, and having an east and west course, we concluded must lead to Columbus; we thought it best, for this reason, to avoid it as much as possible, and therefore crossed over into the adjacent fields, where we found a patch of ripe sweet potatoes, to which we helped ourselves with the freedom of proprietors and went on.

It was now eleven o'clock by the stars, and we had traveled thus far undisturbed. To vary the stillness of the tramp, three of those terrible blood-hounds suddenly set up a fearful howling a few rods ahead of us in the

road by the side of which we were walking. We sprang off to the left to give them a wider birth, but the farther we advanced the louder they barked. When quite near them we found ourselves in the vicinity of a large pond, which stretched quite out of sight both to the right and left. Following along its edge to the left for a couple of miles, and finding no place to cross, we retraced our steps to the point where we met the dogs. Though they were still baying, they had passed back a half a mile or more, and we ventured to cross the water upon the long bridge which spanned it at this point. We carefully scrutinized each turn and bend, each corner and shadow, lest some lurking foe might intercept and seize us, for we anticipated that rebel pickets might be stationed here to apprehend runaways from their own lines. Nothing, however, occurred to disturb us, either while crossing the bridge or while passing through the silent village that stood at the farther end of it.

The remainder of this night was passed much in the usual way, the dogs did not alarm us again (they had already cost us four good miles of extra travel), and we hurried on over the accustomed number of hills, fields, ravines, and drains. Late in the night we were fortunate in finding an apple orchard, where we filled the space in our pockets and haversacks left by the sweet potatoes and sugar cane, which we had likewise picked up in our route. We sought shelter for the day on a rocky hill which rose high above the surrounding eminences, and had the appearance of being seldom visited. Its summit was covered with loose chestnut leaves, which were lying upon the ground to the depth of several inches, affording a fine and warm place for rest; and from it we had an excellent view of the surrounding country for a great distance on either hand. We spent the long day very agreeably, dividing our time munching our raw potatoes, apples, and sugar cane, discussing the prospect before us and the difficulties we had already overcome, and taking a needful amount of rest. Our map was carefully examined, and our locality ascertained as nearly as might be; we had

kept a full and correct record of our course from the start, and estimated the distance we had traveled as accurately as we could. We judged ourselves to be in the vicinity of the railroad running from Columbus to Fort Valley, and made in our calculations for the night's march all preparations for crossing it.

Our journey was again through fields and timber land. We passed the residences of many wealthy planters, whose surroundings were pervaded by an air of opulence and luxury. Large groves of various species of trees were spread out in their front, affording a grateful shade in the fierce heat of the climate. The "servant's quarters" were usually arranged in lines around the main building, and on many plantations were various kinds of shops, a grist-mill, and a church, the whole resembling a small village. In passing these houses we were invariably assailed by the dogs, which we tried to avoid by making a circuit of greater or less extent. Sometimes, however, we drew near together, and pushed boldly past them, being careful to do nothing to irritate them against us. About midnight, we entered a forest of pine, in which we continued until morning. We chose our resting place for the day beneath a giant pine, where we remained till night undisturbed except by a flock of quails that visited us.

At the usual signal we resumed our march. The greater part of the night was spent in getting clear of the forest, and though we occasionally crossed a wagon track, we saw no signs of cultivated land. It was a matter of much wonder to us that we did not find the railroad, for if our distances had been correctly estimated we must be very near it. Toward morning we heard the loud roar of a heavy body of water, and, turning in the direction from which it seemed to proceed, we soon came to a high mill-dam, over which a torrent of water was rushing, and crossed the stream on a foot bridge of hewn timbers. We had scarcely reached the opposite side when the welcome sound of the locomotive whistle assured us that we were traveling in the right direction, and were near our jour-



ney's end. With light spirits we bounded forward, and after walking about two miles we discovered the track, at a point which we judged to be near a station, because of the numerous forsaken, dilapidated shanties which we found there. We now desired to discover a mile-post, to learn how far we were from Columbus, as that would give us our exact latitude and longitude, and enable us to perfect our plans for the remainder of our flight. We accordingly continued upon the track for the distance of two miles or more, searching for the post, but without success; for, as we afterward learned, the mile-posts upon this road (an exception to the general rule upon Southern railroads) were placed away from the track, and near the fence. Daylight again appearing admonished us that we must abandon the open country and seek security in some more retired spot. We found a favorable locality in a patch of "hog brakes" and low bushes, and passed the long day without food.

We had been so long in reaching the railroad that we thought our course hitherto had been too far west; so when the hour for starting came we took a line due north. Our first experience was in a piece of thick woods, in which the darkness of a dungeon reigned; no sooner were these passed than we entered a hedge of cane brakes, growing so compactly and so interlaced together, like a strong net-work, that we could penetrate it only by exerting all our strength; these overcome, we next encountered a river, which was easily forded, then another hedge, then low timber land. The night was exceedingly dark, and we were in danger of losing our way, because we could not consult the compass; but we caught a couple of lightning bugs (being without matches), and these being confined in the box, and touched up as occasion required, afforded sufficient light to disclose the needle. It was necessary to refer to the compass at nearly every step while we were in the woods, or any other dark passage, lest we should change our course; many times, five minutes after having entered the darkness in an exactly north direction, on consulting our guide we have found ourselves



going exactly south. The same result will follow if one attempts to walk blindfold to a distant object. In fact, the compass was our sole reliance upon our entire journey; for without it we must have inquired our way or have been lost, either of which events would surely have occasioned our recapture.

The river made several short turns at this point, of which fact we were of course unaware at the time, and, following the compass in a straight line, we were compelled to cross it three times in as many miles. The second passage was effected upon a log lying about a foot under the water, which was fortunately found to extend nearly to the farther side of the stream. The third, however, presented a greater difficulty. The stream was too deep to be forded, and too wide for any but experts to attempt to cross by swimming. Luckily a grape vine

which had grown up into a tree, on the opposite side of the river, was within reach; this we seized and cut off, so that it would swing clear of the water. It being about three-fourths of an inch in thickness, was easily climbed hand over hand like a rope. I was the leader of the party



for that night, and it devolved upon me to make the first trial of our novel suspension bridge. Ascending it rapidly until my feet would be above the water, as I passed over it, I commenced oscillating like a pendulum until I had gained sufficient momentum to carry me over to the tree, when, clenching its trunk with my legs, I slid down safely to the ground. I then threw the grape vine back to my companions, who each followed successfully. This was our "bad place;" and after resting a few minutes to recover our breath, we resumed our journey, with no farther adventures for that night.

The next night's march was much like the others, and being accomplished we sought concealment. We had hardly awakened from our first brief nap, when the noise of some one splitting timber and the rumbling of wagons announced that we were very insecure. We kept our place till afternoon, when Hudson and myself lay down to sleep. Scarcely had I become unconscious, when I was aroused by a twitch of my blouse by Mr. Beach, who was standing sentinel, and springing suddenly to my feet I saw two small boys, accompanied by a large, fierce-looking dog, passing on a little foot path directly in front of us. The dog, attracted by the scent, made toward the spot where we were crouched, barking furiously. The situation was dubious for a moment; for the bristling mane of the beast and his savage growl evinced hostile intentions. We did not, on the whole, so much fear his bite as his bark; for we could defend ourselves against the one with our stout oak cudgels, but if the other attracted the boys' attention to us they would give the alarm, and we should be discovered. Fortunately, as we raised our clubs to ward off any attack he might be disposed to make, the boys whistled to him, when, dropping his tail as if he was aware that he had made a mistake and was ashamed of himself, he ran away. It was an exceedingly narrow escape; for if the boys had advanced a half a dozen yards toward us, we must have been discovered. As soon as they were out of sight, we proceeded to change our base with great rapidity. We heard them return a few hours afterward, but escaped their observation.

It was now Thursday, and we had been on our route just one week. Our success thus far had been all we had reason to expect, while our prospects of ultimately reaching our lines in safety were bright and promising. With cheerful hearts, we pursued our way, as soon as the gathering darkness afforded protection. Our course during the early part of the evening was through ravines, over steep, rocky ridges, where we were in constant danger of tumbles and bruises from stepping upon the loose cobble stones that abounded, and through forests and fields.

Coming suddenly to the terminus of one of these long ridges, on the top of which we had traveled for the matter of ten miles or more, we saw a broad belt, like silver, stretching away in our front, and winding gracefully around the base of the ridge to the right. No river had been set down at this point in our calculations, and it was, therefore, a matter of no little surmise what stream it could be. Descending the hill and examining the river, we found that its course was south-easterly, while from its size we judged it to be the Flint, which we supposed was far to the east of us. Our first thought was to follow it up until we came to a ford; but in the attempt, we discovered that we should be obliged to cross so many tributaries, if we continued, that it would be better to effect a passage of the one stream, and have done with it, than to be compelled to wade through so many. We accordingly made search for a shallow place, through which we could safely wade; but finding none, we abandoned that plan also, and, turning back from the river, struck off to the north-west farther inland, in the direction, as nearly as we could make out, of Newnan, on the Atlanta and Montgomery Railroad. No new adventure worthy of narration occurred to us during the night, and we passed the following day upon a high ridge overlooking the country for miles on either hand, from which, also, we caught sight of the steeples and chimneys of Greenville.

The sun being out of sight, we proceeded, in the usual order, on the left of the road, which we had abandoned late the night before, on account of a furious assault of the dogs, with a view of flanking the dwelling which they protected, which piece of strategy being triumphantly effected, after spending an hour in attempting to ford a stream that was not fordable, and to get over a swamp that could not be got over, and in coming back to our original base, we reached the road. Scarcely had we settled into a walk, when two men were discovered a few rods ahead, approaching us. We bounded over the fence and waited until they passed by; returning again, we were startled by the baying of a hound in pursuit of something,



cheered on by its master with his horn. This circumstance, together with the fact that the road was beaten with much travel, warned us that the better policy was to abandon the highway entirely. Acting upon this hint, we struck off into the fields, traveling over the accustomed variety of ground. Rain commencing to fall about midnight, rather than continue exposed to it, we turned into an old log building that had been used for storing cotton, where we remained until daylight, changing our quarters at that time, lest they might be visited during the day. Striking into a thicket on one side of us, a chestnut tree was discovered, upon which was a grape vine, whose clusters of rich, ripe fruit tempted us to halt. Gathering our hats full of the grapes, we hurried through the thicket to avoid some boys that were playing in the cotton field we had just left, and finally stopped upon the bank of a beautiful stream of clear water. Here Beach and Hudson threw themselves upon the ground, and were soon lost in sleep, while I stood sentry over them. The boys were approaching nearer and nearer to us in their play in the cotton field, and had already passed over the ground we had occupied but a few minutes before. I was intently watching their motions, fearful that they would make their appearance on our side of the thicket and discover us, when I suddenly heard the crackling of twigs behind me. Turning quickly round, and seeing nothing, I supposed it to be a pig making his way to the brook for water, and returned to my observation of the boys. Presently the crackling in the thicket grew louder, and, upon looking up again, I saw, to my great terror, an old negro coming directly toward us. My first impulse was to rouse my companions and flee; but as the intruder was not more than a hundred yards from us, and would certainly discover us if we moved, I determined to wait till he came up and throw myself upon his good-nature. With a feeling of horrible curiosity, I watched his approach, speculating upon how near he would come before discovering us; whether he would be frightened when he



saw us; whether he would run back and report his discovery at the plantation; or whether he would not be so intent upon his pursuit (he was angling) as to pass us without observation. I even counted the number of steps he took forward, and calculated with eager curiosity how many more he would have to make before reaching us; and it seemed hours that I stood there with my gaze fixed upon him. He came within fifteen yards before he saw me, and when he raised his eyes, and I knew that I stood revealed before him, all my fear was gone, and in its place was as strong a feeling to conciliate him and make him our friend. This I proceeded at once to do, and found it an easier matter than I had hoped. I gave him as vivid an account of our treatment at Andersonville as I was able, and then rapidly sketched the perils of our escape. His sympathies were strongly enlisted in our behalf, and he volunteered us all the aid in his power to render. Feeling sure that he might be of service to us, I then aroused my comrades, when we learned from him the situation of affairs in our front, which, as it afterward proved, was entirely accurate.

Three days before, there was a force of one thousand men encamped a mile and a half from where we were resting, which had since moved east. Hood's whole army was at that time stationed near Griffin, east of the Flint river, and was probably there still. We were on the direct road to Atlanta, by way of Newnan, to which latter place it was nineteen miles. Our best and shortest route to Atlanta was the one we were then upon. After giving these particulars, the negro told us that his master, formerly a colonel in the rebel service, had been killed in the battle of Kenesaw Mountain, and that his mistress was destitute of nearly all kinds of provisions, for which reason he could not answer our urgent appeal for food. Having wished us success, and promising to reveal our presence to no one, he passed on down the stream. As soon as he was fairly out of sight, we moved three miles farther back into the woods, as a precaution against

being informed against, where we remained unmolested until night.

We pushed forward after sunset, calculating to reach Newnan in two nights if the difficulties of the journey were not greater than usual. Coming suddenly upon a stream in the midst of a piece of timber land, we were forced to strip ourselves and ford it; narrowly escaping drowning, for the water was over our heads, we finally reached the opposite side in safety, only to encounter new difficulties and dangers. The late rains had swollen the streams, which had laid the surrounding country under water, or converted it into one vast slough: the mud and water were "awful," in the strongest sense of that term, and with the darkness made the scene absolutely appalling. There was, however, but one way out of it, and that was straight forward. Plunging on then in our course, we floundered through the mud, scrambling about in the darkness, with the compass and lightning bugs as our only guides, for several hours, until, by dint of hard labor, we reached a highway, pointed out to us by our colored friend. This gained, our progress for the remainder of the night was as rapid as it had formerly been slow, and when day dawned, we sought our usual refuge in the woods, where we remained secure till dark.

Striking out at the accustomed hour, we reached the road we had abandoned in the morning, and pursued our journey in safety upon it for a long distance. We came, at length, to a point where a second road crossed the one we were pursuing in an oblique direction, and we were extremely puzzled which of them to follow up. Selecting the one which appeared the most eligible, we advanced upon it, and were led directly into the grounds of a wealthy planter, where the track abruptly terminated. There was no other solution of the difficulty we now found ourselves in, than to retrace our steps to the highway we had left, which we proceeded to do. With this little delay, we pushed on rapidly for the railroad, which runs from Atlanta to Montgomery, and reached it at one o'clock the next morning. Passing up the road a short distance, we

found a mile-post, by which we learned that we were forty-one miles from Atlanta and forty-five from West Point. Our feelings on making this discovery can be better imagined than described; two nights more, and we should be safely lodged with our friends; our trials and labors would be over; the liberty we had sought, through so many hardships and dangers, would be gained. But, as it proved, our perils were not yet over.

We marched on with light hearts and firm tread, Hudson in the van, Beach in the center, while I brought up the rear. It was agreed that whenever the leader came to a switch, he should halt and wait till we all came up; when, as the switch was pretty sure evidence of a station near by, we were to flank the place, either to the right or left as circumstances might indicate for the best. We saw many of the effects of McCook's recent cavalry raid upon the railroad, and inferred from the fresh earth in the fills, and the number of new ties, that he had damaged the rebels considerably. Two long side tracks were soon met with, but Hudson, either not noticing them, or led by a spirit of recklessness, passed on rapidly; we dared not shout to him to call him back, and followed on with great caution. As soon as we reached the station, a dog flew out at Hudson, barking furiously, and while we were yet abreast the platform, a man, aroused by the barking of the dog, jumped to his feet. We kept on as fast as we could, concluding that we had fallen upon a difficulty, that could best be solved by putting on a bold face and resolutely proceeding. When I reached the platform, the dog sprang for me, but, as I raised my club to smite him, the man on the platform called him off. Scarcely was this danger passed, when we came upon a fresh one, in the form of a rebel soldier, who was sitting on one of the rails of the track with two canteens swung from his shoulder. He saluted Hudson and asked, "Where you uns all's gwine?" To which the reply was, that we were going a short distance up to see our friends before Sherman advanced. When I came up he propounded the same question to me, to which I replied like Hudson. Thanks to his bibula-



tions, he did not prosecute his inquiries further; and as we did not incline to make an intimate acquaintance with him, we hurried on with increased faith in army whisky. It was evident that no trains ran on this road, for the track between the rails was filled with thick mud, washed upon it by the heavy rains, and there were no marks such as would have been made by the flanges if the car wheels had passed over it; from which we also drew the inference that no considerable army could be stationed further up on the road, because, if such had been the case, it would have been employed to transport supplies.

Hudson's blundering through the place in the manner he did, although it led to no disaster, rendered us somewhat timid of his leadership; and by common consent I took the van, as I thought I could see objects which neither of the others noticed. Every mile was now bringing us nearer Atlanta, and it is safe to assert that the "grass did not grow under our feet." Some three or four miles from Newnan, in the direction of Atlanta, where we encountered the "inebriated soldier," there is a deep cut, curving round to the left, nearly three-fourths of a mile in length, with banks so high and steep that it is next to impossible to ascend them. It occurred to me, on entering this cut, that it would be a bad place to be caught in, and I took every precaution against that event. When nearly through the pass, I imagined that I saw picket fires, a little on one side of the track, reflected upon the clouds; at the same instant, I caught sight of what appeared to be some object moving directly toward us. Not wishing to give a false alarm, or turn back a half mile or more, without a certainty of the necessity for doing so, I lay down by the track in such a position as to get the object between me and the light, when the figure of a man was plainly to be perceived approaching us. I turned back as quickly as possible, and whispered my discovery to my companions, when we retreated upon a double-quick out of the cut. As soon as we were fairly out, we sprang over the railroad fence and waited further developments. Nothing more occurring, we marched on



in the fields by the side of the railroad until Hudson, becoming disgusted with the tall, wet grass and weeds, which made the walking disagreeable enough, and complaining of our childish fears, we finally told him to lead on, and we would follow him. He did so, making direct for the railroad again; we came in sight of it, after struggling through swamp, briers, and thicket, at a point where there was a heavy fill. Following Hudson through the last patch of briers, I looked up toward the railroad, where I saw two soldiers, with fixed bayonets, walking rapidly in the direction of Atlanta; we had been recognized as we passed through Newnan, and they were in pursuit of us, fortunately missing us on account of our having been frightened from the railroad by the supposed picket fire. I whispered Hudson, who had not then seen them, but could not make him hear me, when I sprang forward, and, touching him with my cane, pointed them out to him. He was perfectly satisfied that it was no longer safe to travel upon the railroad that night, and consented to leave it for the present, keeping well to the left of the track, though near enough to it to hear a train if one chanced to pass. We soon struck into a body of woods, when, as it was near morning, we concluded to stop and await the coming night. The negroes in the adjacent fields kept up a continual chattering during the entire day; and the crowing of the cocks, which seemed like notes of triumph and omens of success, cheered us in our solitude.

The day was dark and rainy, and about three o'clock in the afternoon we ventured to move forward under the shelter of the woods in a line parallel with the railroad. For some distance we continued in this manner, but the woods gradually becoming thinner we could remain in them no longer, except by crossing the railroad. Carefully reconnoitering the road, and finding it quite clear of any thing human, we skulked across it into the woods beyond; here we came upon a highway, and were about to hurry over it, when we heard a swift galloping, as of a large body of horse, rapidly increasing in loudness as the troop

neared us. We lost no time in retreating under the bushes, where we watched the animals' legs until the whole number had passed, when we crossed the road and continued forward until we came to an open field, where, for prudential reasons, we halted until darkness should render a further advance secure. It was now the 20th of September, and the moon did not rise till near eleven o'clock; if it should continue cloudy and misty as it now was, the darkness would be so great as to render traveling in the early part of the evening, until the moon rose, almost impossible. We were in the midst, or at least in the immediate vicinity, of a body of soldiers, but whether they were our friends or our enemies we could not determine. When it finally became dark, we again set out, keeping close together to avoid being separated in the darkness, and near to the railroad fence to avoid losing our course. The difficulties and dangers seemed to increase at every step, while, with incredible labor, we were making almost no progress. We therefore lay by under a pine tree and slept until the moon should rise. Fortunately, we awoke just as it was coming up, so that no time was lost, and started at once. We were successful in very soon finding a road, which had the same general direction as the railroad, crossing and re-crossing it at many points; this we followed for a considerable distance, when, becoming satisfied that by keeping straight on upon the railroad we should be quite as secure, and at the same time save much needless walking, we took the track, and learned from a mile-post that by rail it was twenty-six miles to Atlanta. Before leaving the highway, however, the signs of the presence of an army had continued to increase. Before the door of one farm house past which we traveled a carriage and horses were drawn up, and the building was brilliantly lighted, as if some important personage were present; in the corners of the fences were found half-eaten corn cobs and bits of sugar cane, evidencing that cavalry scouts had been there but a short time before.

These things made us watchful, and we proceeded with the utmost caution, inspecting every suspicious object and

listening to every sound. Scarcely had we reached the railroad when the leader discovered a man upon the track approaching us; we sprang out of the slight cut we were in at the time, leaped over the fence, and crouching upon the ground in a corner awaited the result. The man came to where we left the track, halted, and looked carefully around him; it was a moment of terrible suspense, for he had certainly had an indistinct vision of us, and we lay in perfect silence, even holding our breath, determined that we would not be recaptured unless overpowered by numbers. Thinking he had been deceived, he passed on, much to our relief; but we had seen enough of him to know that he was a rebel infantry soldier, and that if there were cavalry still in our neighborhood they must belong to the rebels also. We presently had an opportunity to test the accuracy of this opinion; for scarcely had the soldier passed us when the clattering of horses' feet announced that a cavalry force was upon us. Hugging the ground still closer, we saw at once, as they hurried by, that it was genuine secesh, being mounted partly on mules and partly on horses, and armed with carbines, shot-guns and pistols. The rear man said to the others as he passed us, "The Yanks will soon be along," and we fervently hoped that he spoke the truth. Hudson, thinking they all had gone by, commenced climbing over the fence, when we, whose ears were sharper than his, whispered to him to wait a moment, as we thought we heard another horse coming, but he did not heed us, and had scarcely reached the ground when the last horse came thundering by. Luckily he crawled into the dark fence corner and escaped observation. We were now more fully satisfied that traveling longer in the road was unsafe, as it rendered us liable at any moment to be discovered and recaptured; it was evident to us that the men we had seen were scouts, watching Sherman's advance, and that they were picketed upon every road. We tramped on again, across the fields, past a cotton gin, and through a drove of cattle feeding in a field of corn. Ascending a hill scarcely a mile from the railroad, a long row of camp-fires, stretching far off to the



front and right, met our astonished eyes. Keeping on to the left to avoid them, we saw in the red light wedge tents with men standing before them, and picket fires with others walking around among them. It was so near day that the teamsters were beginning to search for their mules, which had been turned loose to pick up their rations for the night. Finding no convenient place of concealment at hand, we continued walking much longer than we intended, and finally took up our day's lodgings in the leafy top of a tall oak tree which was lying prostrate upon the ground. The air was filled with a cold mist all day, and our position was one of great discomfort, but we solaced ourselves with the thought that we were but a few miles from Atlanta and freedom, and that with so great a boon so nearly within our grasp we could endure even greater inconveniences for the present. We were so near our lines that with ordinary success we could reach them in another night, or at any rate we should be so far on our way that we could travel the next day without fear of being apprehended. So we clung to the protecting limbs of our old friend without repining.

A number of infantry and cavalry marched directly past our hiding place, and musketry firing was heard at irregular intervals, during the entire day—perhaps for the purpose of frightening any stragglers, who might be skulking in the thickets to evade duty. The bullets whizzed past us, as we lay concealed, but did not frighten us particularly, as we had frequently heard them before. We were, however, obliged to keep unusually quiet, and were not molested. At night we crept out from our position and proceeded on our way, keeping well to our left; at about eight o'clock, we struck into a large body of woods, in which we kept for a long time. We traveled swiftly, stopping occasionally to listen to the snorting of the horses that were passing upon the road a short distance from us, when we came suddenly upon an open spot in the timber, where the low shrubs and small trees had been cleared away. Here we were alarmed by the sound of horses eating corn in the ear. It was about ten o'clock;



the darkness was almost blinding: we could see nothing definitely, but the objects picketed in irregular lines revealed themselves by being darker than the open sky beyond; and, by the noise of their eating, we knew what they were. We traveled a long distance along that line, to find a passage through, and it seemed as if a whole corps of cavalry was encamped in that place. At last, after much patient search, we found a path, which, being well trodden, looked, in the surrounding blackness, like a strip of white cloth stretched upon the ground; and walking on tiptoe upon it, we passed successfully through the line, without waiting to satisfy our curiosity as to whether the riders of the horses were on the ground or not; neither did we consider it safe to stop and inquire whether the force belonged to C. S. A. or U. S., although, for all that we knew, they were Unionists. A short distance from us, on the road, were heavily loaded wagons, trucking along in either direction; striking rapidly across the road into an open field, we found where a train had been parked the night before. With all these indications of the presence of an army in our neighborhood, we could do nothing but proceed slowly, with every faculty strained to its utmost, to detect any movement hostile to our enterprise.

We soon came upon a creek, whose waters, upon examination, we found to flow west; this was the first instance of a westerly course we had discovered in any stream, and we were rejoiced to find ourselves so near the Chattahoochie, into which the creek must empty. Crossing it, we came into a patch of sweet potatoes, with which we made haste to fill our haversacks, in the expectation that the next time they were filled, it would be at the expense of our worthy Uncle. Passing on, we entered another body of woods, having traveled some three miles since passing through the cavalry force; here, about twelve o'clock, we ran into the infantry picket line; as soon as we discovered the picket walking his beat, we carefully crept back, thinking, by keeping well to the right, we could flank the force. Moving, therefore, a considerable distance in our new direction, we again sought a passage through; but the same

line of pickets confronted us again. Judging by this time that we had struck their left wing, we retreated to our original line of march, determined to advance far enough to go completely around them. In pursuance of this change of plan, we struck a due west course, and traveled until daylight, when we again turned our faces toward Atlanta. But at every point at which we approached the picket line; we found a heavy force of infantry. It had now become light, and it was necessary to seek concealment. While we were looking for it, we came in sight of the head-quarters, and the teamsters were hunting for their teams. A lieutenant and a private passed so near us that we were compelled to skulk back into the woods, to avoid their observation. We returned a considerable distance before we found a retreat sufficiently secure, for we felt sure that we were completely surrounded by our enemies, and that all hope of final escape lay in our avoiding discovery for one day more. We chose a thicket for our hiding place, and, to make it the more secure, cut small shoots and brush, which we stuck into the ground around it. At ten o'clock, an unarmed man passed within half a dozen rods of us, but, fortunately, we remained unnoticed. It then occurred to me that we were not safe here, for any one passing in that direction, either in search of swine or on any other errand, was quite likely to visit the spot. I thereupon proposed to my comrades to climb a tree which stood near us, among whose thick leaves we should be less exposed. Beach coincided with me at once, but Hudson, who was tired of his last night's experience in a tree-top, refused to go with us, and remained in the old position, while we hastily clambered up the tree. A couple of hours passed in silence, when we saw two men coming through the woods, the one armed with a musket, the other with his walking stick. From our elevated position we could distinctly overhear their conversation; they were searching the woods for stray pigs, we scarcely breathed while they remained in sight, fearful of making the lightest sound to invite their attention toward us; nor was our anxiety at all relieved when we saw

them separate, the unarmed man going directly toward the thicket in which Hudson lay.

Hope died in our bosoms as we saw him thrust his cane among the limbs we had so carefully arranged, and we felt that we were already captured. But a few moments elapsed before we saw Hudson coming out of his hiding place, when a long conversation ensued, during which Hudson claimed to belong to the 45th Georgia Reserve, and to be making an effort to get home in this manner because he could not get a furlough. To the question how he came to be dressed in blue uniform, he replied that he had been stationed at Andersonville during the summer, and had exchanged his old clothes with a Yankee prisoner for a full suit of new ones, giving a few vegetables "to boot." The man continued to question him for some time, hoping that some one would come along to arrest him; but no one coming, he finally went away, when Hudson came to the tree in which we were concealed, informed us of what had passed, and told us that he would seek a new hiding place wherever he could find a suitable spot. This man told Hudson that the whole rebel army was in line of battle, not two hundred yards from the woods in which we lay. The bands at the head-quarters and along the whole line had been playing Dixie during the entire morning. We therefore knew into whose hands we should fall if we were captured at that place, and we were not surprised to see a file of men, armed with muskets, approach the spot where our comrade had been discovered but a few minutes before. Not finding him, they naturally instituted a search among the tree tops, well knowing he could have escaped in no other direction. We were not sufficiently concealed to avoid detection, and it required but a brief search to espy us. They called upon us to surrender, and we saw at once the propriety of doing so. Clambering down as quickly as we could, we gave ourselves up without any explanation to the guard, and were immediately taken to the brigade head-quarters, to be disposed of as seemed best to the powers at that place.

## CHAPTER XXV.

REBEL HEAD-QUARTERS—OPELIKA, COLUMBUS, AND FORT VALLEY—PLAN OF ESCAPE DETECTED—ANDERSONVILLE AGAIN—SAVANNAH—SPECIAL EXCHANGE OF TEN THOUSAND SICK—REMOVED TO MILLEN—THE PRISON PEN—RECRUITING AMONG THE PRISONERS—FREE.



OUR feelings, upon being recaptured, can not well be described. We had been out just fourteen days and nights; had traveled one hundred and seventy-five miles, through ditches, rivers, swamps, and briers; had performed incredible labor and met with many hair-breadth escapes; had been exposed to storm, cold, and hunger; had overcome all these, and arrived within sight of the goal, only to be delivered up to our enemies through the imprudence and obstinacy of one of our own number. Had we fallen into toils that had been set for us; had we been captured through a combination of circumstances which ordinary prudence and sagacity could not have controlled—we should have accepted the situation as a stroke of evil fortune which we could not evade. Repining, however, would effect no good in our behalf, and we put the best possible face upon the matter, feeling that, if we were conquered, we were not subdued, and resolved to embrace the first opportunity for escape that presented itself.

We were first taken to the head-quarters of Brigadier-General Gibson, and sharply questioned as to our object in being where we were found, how we came there, and where we were going. We had agreed, before setting out, that, if we should be captured, we would each tell the same story of our escape, so that, in case we were examined separately, our accounts would agree. I therefore



told the general, in reply to his first inquiry, that we made our escape while on the cars from Andersonville to Charleston. This view of the matter, though a flight of imagination, seemed best to us, even at the sacrifice of truth, for if we should be remanded to Andersonville, we should be less exposed to the vengeance of Captain Wirz, who esteemed his honor (in his sense of that term) in a high degree compromised if a prisoner escaped from him, while he considered the offense by many degrees less criminal if made from any one else. To the question why we wished to escape we replied that the sufferings, caused by starvation, sickness, and exposure, which we had been forced to undergo for more than a year, had impelled us to make an attempt to regain our freedom and preserve our lives. The general then inquired about our treatment, and we explained it to him plainly and firmly. He did not relish the statement as we made it, and it is to be presumed believed no more of it than he pleased; but we "cleared our conscience" in improving the only probable opportunity we should ever have of setting the matter right before him, and felt a degree of relief in the performance of the duty. He replied that he owed the Yankee nation no favors, not even that of his good will, and if he could have his own way in the matter he would raise the black flag, and take no prisoners at all, which specimen of conceited bluster and braggadocio so inseparable from modern "chivalry" we had heard so often that it did not produce the effect of frightening us as he intended, but, on the contrary, made us still more obstinately firm, when he informed us that we were prisoners of war and entitled to treatment as such. We were then sent to General Clayton, a division commander, and from him to General S. D. Lee, who commanded a corps. They said very little to us, except that it was rather hard, after we had made so desperate an effort to escape, to be sent back to Andersonville—a view remarkably consonant with our own—but that it was their duty to remand us. They further comforted us by the intelligence that we were only six miles from Sherman's pickets, and that if

we had succeeded in getting two hundred yards further we should have been outside of their lines. We were soon sent to the provost-marshal's office, near Hood's head-quarters, where we passed the night. One of the guard as he walked by our side quietly informed us that their army was essentially beaten—"licked all ter pieces," was his expression—and that every private as well as officer knew it perfectly well, and that it was of no use to fight any longer. He stated, moreover, that he should desert as soon as a favorable opportunity for getting North should offer—with much more to the same effect. The same sentiments were generally expressed by the sentries who guarded us here; whether for effect, or because they really felt as they said they did, we had no means of determining.

While at this place, two new prisoners were brought in, one of whom was an orderly on General Kilpatrick's staff, from whom we gathered the latest news from Sherman's army. Hudson was also brought in, in a short time after our arrival. The man who discovered him had reported at once to General Gibson, who immediately ordered out a regiment to skirmish through the woods till he was found. At three o'clock on Friday afternoon the prisoners were marched to Palmetto Station, where, as it proved, we had been forced to leave the railroad, by discovering a soldier upon the track. Here we took the cars, which that day ran up from Newnan for the first time since McCook's raid. The depot and all the principal buildings had been burned by that gallant raider, only a few weeks before, and the blackened ruins lay scattered around on every hand. Here, too, the whole of Hood's transportation train was parked, in readiness to march; in fact, every thing seemed to indicate that a movement in force was on foot, and we surmised that it was Hood's intention to move north, and, cutting Sherman's line of communication, force him to retreat. At five o'clock we started for West Point, eighty-four miles from Atlanta, where we arrived at an early hour next morning. Halting but a short time for wood and water, we pursued our jour-

ney to Opelika, Ala., and waited some four hours for the train to Columbus. This place showed the ravages of war, having received a flying visit from the Union cavalry, from the effect of which it had not recovered. All the public buildings had been destroyed, and charred remains and tall chimneys marked the sites where they had stood. While halting here, we improved the time in manufacturing various kinds of dishes from the tin that had been used for roofing the depot. A large crowd of citizens gathered around us, partly to talk with us, and partly to witness the dexterity of the "mud-sills" in changing a sheet of tin into a plate or a cup, with no other tools than a stick of wood and a cobble-stone. Our handicraft surprised them, and their credulity was so great that there is no doubt, if we could have donned a gray suit, used profane language, and boasted loudly, we should have made fortunes—in Confederate scrip—by converting those roofing materials into table ware.

They manifested the greatest anxiety about the ensuing presidential election, and when we told them that Abraham Lincoln would probably be elected, they expressed great satisfaction, because they believed under his administration their leaders would be unable to buy a peace, which would amount to no more than an armistice at best. They wanted independence; if they could not get that, then subjugation was the next best thing; for then the questions which divided the two sections would be settled in a manner from which there could be no appeal; while, if a compromise was made, the war would have been a failure, because they could have compromised before it commenced, and because such a termination would be but a cessation of hostilities, to recommence whenever the parties might differ in the interpretation of the compact. This view was taken by the "last ditch" men, who were spoiling to be subjugated, and they talked loud and long in their boasting way. We did not wish to enter upon any discussion with them, but their braggadocio forced us to reply, after we had endured it as long as we could. We told them, after their own style, that we should subjugate



them; that if, as they boasted, every man of them would die, before that event was accomplished, they had better take leave of their friends as soon as possible, for as sure as another September came, they would all be in —, a climate more intensely tropical than any they had yet experienced. We had millions of tons of iron and lead in our unworked mines, and thousands of thousands of men, women, and children, to work the ore into guns and bullets; while powder actually grew upon the Western prairies, without cultivation. Our government was running the armories and iron works day and night, without cessation, and thus far had utterly failed to supply guns and ammunition for the forces as fast as they wanted to come into the field; there were five millions of men who would join the army, if they could only obtain the arms they needed. The Yankee thrived best under difficulties, and the philanthropists of the North had declared that war was their natural state, and advocated the policy of provoking a contest with England and France, as soon as the South was used up, that the Yankees might have room to grow; for they were sure to wither away, unless they could fight. The only way to stop the "effusion of blood" was to withdraw their armies from the field, surrender the forts, arsenals, and other property they had stolen from us, go quietly home, and obey the laws like good citizens.

Another class who conversed with us, whose first question was "What are all you 'uns fighting we 'uns for?" whose education had not reached the point of acquiring correct use of their vernacular, but who, nevertheless, would be required to dig the "last ditch" for those who coveted it so much, and stand a living wall in front of it for their protection, while in the article of death; was much more reasonable. They had realized what war meant, and were quite willing to submit to the old regime, if their rights could be guaranteed to them, as they enjoyed them before the war. They seemed most to fear negro equality, and ridiculed the idea of fighting side by side with the darkey. Our most obvious reply to this thrust was, that it was much better to fight with him than run from him;



with which terrible sarcasm, the crowd abandoned the contest and retreated. We were here joined by four prisoners who had made their escape from Andersonville the same day we did, and were recaptured near West Point. There were now ten prisoners in all, and we had six men to guard us.

We were placed on board a passenger train, and moved forward for Columbus, where we arrived at sundown. This village is situated on the east bank of the Chattahoochee, at the head of navigation; it contained several large cotton factories, and the dwellings of the operatives were arranged in regular streets upon the west side of the stream; they were built exactly alike, and presented a fine appearance. Arriving at the depot, we were delayed long enough to exchange our comfortable passenger coach for a box car, and halted for the night. While we were on the side track, Jeff Davis and General Beauregard passed us on a special train, the president being on a stumping excursion. He had just exhorted the "fellow-citizens" of Macon and Columbus to rise and drive the invader from their soil, or the cause was lost; if they but took heart (together with guns in sufficient numbers), they would soon compel Sherman to beat a retreat, more disastrous than that from Moscow, and the "plundering hordes" would be forever expelled from their borders—and much more of the same sort. It was amusing to us, in our intercourse with southern chivalry, to hear the constant recurrence of the words "plundering foes," "thieving enemies," "pillaging hordes;" their theory of the war being, that it was carried on by two independent nations, and that private property, such as stores of bacon, flour, corn, oats, etc., which were only in their owners' hand awaiting the appraisal of the Confederate quartermasters, was to be sacredly protected against capture by us; while, on the other hand, in virtue of superior intelligence and purer blood, on their part, they were entitled to appropriate any thing belonging to us, without returning any equivalent therefor, except the precious privilege of being

robbed by a "chivalrous" highwayman; from which view of the case we, as prisoners of war, considered ourselves at liberty to dissent, and also to levy upon them whenever an opportunity presented itself, and were, therefore, denominated "plundering hordes."

On Sunday morning, our train left for Fort Valley, a point sixty-five miles from Columbus, and thirty-five from Andersonville. Arriving here at two o'clock P. M., we were transferred to a negro pen to await the train, which did not move till morning, to convey us back to the old prison. The pen was a small building with two little windows opposite each other, about twelve inches square, and grated with heavy iron bars. As we entered the building, the door was shut and locked; this was the first time since our recapture that we had been locked in, and we felt it incumbent upon us to effect our escape, if we could. We decided to get through the floor by cutting away a board with our pocket knives, and then to creep out under the building. To ascertain whether we could get out without digging, if we once reached the ground, three or four of the boys obtained permission to go out to procure drinking water, and reconnoitered the position. It was found perfectly practicable, and, upon their report, we immediately set to work cutting through the floor. It was matched pitch pine boards, twelve inches wide by one and a half thick, as hard as oak; but we cut away as fast as we could, blistering our hands, and getting very warm, until a length of board sufficient for our purpose was cut at one end and near the wall of the room. The boys then commenced dancing, shouting, and rattling some chains that were found on the floor, making such a din that I could not be heard while I was prying up the board. We had completed our arrangements before dark, and, to prevent attention being called to our project, I spread an old blanket, which I had purchased of the guard, over the loose board, and lay down upon it.

We had received no rations since leaving Opelika, at which place were stationed some soldiers who had been recently exchanged, and who had given us some hard

bread. At seven o'clock, the guard came into the pen with corn, which had been sent to us through the liberality of the surgeons of a Confederate hospital located at that place. A short time afterward, the guard revisited us, with a request that we sweep the floor. To sweep the spot upon which I was lying would at once reveal the "fraud," and, under a plea of sickness, I was permitted to lie still, inasmuch as I had already made my bed for the night. In the rubbish which was swept out, they found a case-knife belonging to Hudson, which had been hacked like a saw. This excited suspicion against us, and they immediately came in and demanded our pocket-knives. Thinking it would pacify them, we surrendered the knives peaceably, upon a promise that they should be returned to us the next morning, and they left us. But they were not yet satisfied, and came in again about eight o'clock and wanted to inspect the floor. I was obliged to get up and take up my blanket, when, of course, the severed board was discovered. In another hour, we should have all been free; and as we had agreed to take different directions in our escape, it would have been impossible to retake all of us, with our experience in nocturnal travels.

We had now no hope of a better fate than another trial of Andersonville, and the treatment of recaptured prisoners, in the merciless power of Captain Wirz, presented itself to us in all its terrible colors. We did not have much time then to think of it, for the guard kept firing a volley of oaths at us for even attempting to escape from them. They threatened to shoot the first man that moved, and to put us all in irons, unless we would divulge the name of the one who cut the board away. They questioned each man separately upon this point; unsuccessfully, however, for there were no traitors among us. Coming to me last, I acknowledged that I knew who did it, but did not consider it my duty to inform them; and that, if they wanted to put irons on me for it, they had the power to do so, but that it would add no jot or tittle to their wisdom. They suspected Hudson and a man named Crandall of being the guilty parties, and next morning



put irons on their wrists, which were not taken off till we reached Andersonville. This feat accomplished, there came a lull in the shower of profanity for a few minutes, when one fellow, with a more vivid imagination than the others, began to depict their consternation if they had opened the door in the morning and found the cage empty and the birds flown. This was a new view of the case, and as the thought flashed upon them, their expiring anger seemed to receive a sudden and fresh stimulus from the contemplation, and they discharged another and fiercer storm of curses upon us.

The next morning, we were placed in a box car and forwarded to Andersonville. The car contained a large quantity of salt, to which we freely helped ourselves, filling our haversacks. We arrived at the station at noon, and immediately marched to the stockade. A great change had taken place here since our departure, nearly all the prisoners having been sent away. Those that remained had a much improved appearance, as if they had been better fed. We were sent directly to head-quarters, where, as good luck would have it, Captain Wirz was sick (we earnestly hoped he would never recover), and Sergeant Smith received us. Four of the men who came with us, including Crandall, had been paroled to dig trenches for the dead, and were employed in this duty when they made their escape. Crandall had been on this duty for some time before escaping, and when the prisoners were sent to Savannah and Charleston, he had asked permission to go with them, which Captain Wirz had refused. He made his escape on the following day. These four men were at once ordered into the "lying down stocks," and the next day loaded with the ball and chain. Our party escaped punishment until night, probably because it was supposed that we had jumped off the cars after we were beyond Captain Wirz's jurisdiction. But after sunset we were also put into the stocks, and passed the night in them. It was by no means a comfortable position to lie, with our feet twelve inches from the ground; but we thought ourselves fortunate in escaping the standing stocks, and did



not murmur. In the morning we were released, and accompanied by the guard to the cook-house, where good rations of bread, peas, and beef were issued to us. They were given us, however, by the prisoners in charge, and we took care to say nothing to implicate them, for we knew the punishment to which we should expose them if their sympathy with us were known. After breakfast, the four boys were ordered into the stocks again. We expected the same attention would be paid to us, but fortunately were overlooked. A train load of prisoners was to be transferred to Savannah immediately, and we were ordered to fall in and go with it. The order was very readily obeyed, for we were satisfied that any change could not but be for the better, and our second experience of Andersonville was very brief.

Our trip to Savannah was in some respects pleasant, the distance from Andersonville being two hundred and thirty-six miles by rail. We reached that place at sundown on the 28th of September, but were not allowed to get off the cars until dark, for what reason, it was unexplained. We were then marched to the prison south of the old jail, which had been built by the British; there were many of the prisoners that were unable to walk, who were carried by the able-bodied. The pen into which we were presently inducted was constructed of planks nailed upon posts twelve feet in height, set firmly in the ground; it was surrounded with a deep ditch, which had been dug after the prison was inaugurated, on account of several of the first prisoners having escaped by tunneling, the first night they were confined. As at Andersonville, no shelters of any kind had been provided here, and we found ourselves exposed to sun, wind, and rain, without any protection. The water, which was supplied from the city water-works, was pure, and in sufficient quantity for our needs.

At the time of our arrival, there were four or five thousand prisoners confined here, the greater portion of whom were from Andersonville. The change of locality had not benefited them; in fact, except in the matter of water,

our situation was the same as it had been at that place. The "camp" was under the command of Lieutenant Davis, a man of doubtful valor, who was afterward captured on the cars in Ohio, while he was carrying dispatches to Canada, and sent to Fort Delaware. He was in command at Andersonville, during the sickness of Captain Wirz, some time in the summer, and treated the men at that time with as much humanity as his orders would allow him to do; but at Savannah, he endeavored to imitate Captain Wirz in manner, perhaps because he could see promotion in no other way.

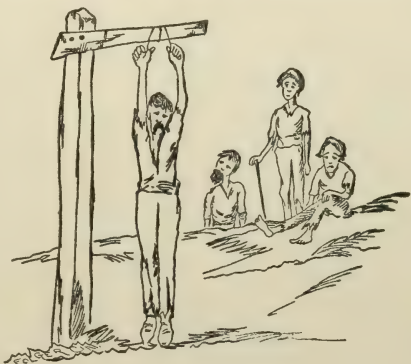
Our rations were issued by the commissary to the police—a body of prisoners organized to keep order in the camp—who delivered them to the sergeants of divisions, by whom they were divided among the men. They consisted of corn meal, rice, sorghum molasses, and fresh beef, in quantities too small to satisfy our needs. It was evident, upon the day of our arrival, that the commissary department at Savannah was no more generous than it was at other places where we had been confined.

Hudson, Beach, and myself had been unfortunate in not being able to find the sergeants, with whom we had deposited our blankets when we had made our escape, and we were now utterly destitute of any protection against the beating storms and the scorching sun. Our clothing, some of which had been worn since our capture, more than twelve months before, was very thin, even where any of it remained; and in many places was completely gone. A hat, unlike any thing ever before known by that name, covered our heads in places, and our feet made vain attempts at concealment in the almost soleless shoes we had not removed for weeks. Death seemed inevitable, and, indeed, would have been preferable to a long continuance of the present treatment. To add to our discomfort, the police had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious to their fellow prisoners by appropriating their rations in the division of them; they began by abusing us with profane taunts, with unnecessary orders about little matters, and, in many instances, ended by spurning us

with their feet or with a blow from their cudgels. Physical chastisement, however, was confined to the helpless—those who were unable to give blow for blow; but it was none the less aggravating to the able bodied. We had no means of protection against these scoundrels, for, upon the first appearance of resistance, we were called to a strict account by the authorities.

Though in the heart of a populous city, we were as much shut out from a knowledge of the scenes enacted in the busy world as if we had been in the midst of the Pacific ocean. We could distinctly hear the tumult of business in the neighboring streets, the rumbling of the cars as they passed to and fro, and the roar of cannon but a short distance down the river, where our friends were leisurely bombarding something near Fort Pulaski. If we could only escape. One of the prisoners made the at-

tempt, but was re-captured by the dogs, brought back and suspended by his thumbs, as a warning to the rest. The punishment for running away was of small consequence to us, but we feared the dogs—those ferocious bloodhounds, by which we were sure to be over-



taken and torn in pieces, and against which we had no protection. The enterprise of the prisoners at this place took the same direction as at Andersonville, and a brisk trade was carried on in taffy (made from sorghum), in beer, and the exchange of one kind of ration for another. This served to relieve the terrible monotony that was killing us, by furnishing something to think about and by stimulating our mental energies into something like action.

Day after day passed in this manner, without change, until the 13th of October, when a Savannah paper found



its way into the pen, in which it was stated that Major Mulford had just left Fortress Monroe for Savannah with 10,000 rebel sick and wounded, to exchange for a like number of Federals. This news was cheering to every one, both the well and the invalid, for it was horrible for the strong man to be confined side by side with the sick, especially when, as here, the morning sun would often waken him and reveal the comrade whom he had bidden "good night," but a few hours before, stretched cold and lifeless beside him. Lieutenant Davis issued an order the same morning for several detachments to prepare to leave the pen on the following evening, but for what point was mere matter of conjecture, some of the prisoners thinking Charleston, others Millen, to be their destination. All the sailors had previously been sent to Charleston for exchange, and it had been several times reported that that place had been agreed upon as the exchange point. At night the train was filled and started.

The next morning another train load was ordered to be in readiness — this time, we were informed, for Millen. The detachments were taken out in the order of their entering, and, as we were among the very latest of the arrivals, our detachment was not included in the order; notwithstanding which, Beach and myself, desirous of seeing as much of the Confederacy as possible, by a little strategy succeeded in joining the departing column just as it reached the gates, and though Lieutenant Davis discovered the trick, he confined his wrath to a "terrible cussin'," for which he ought to be made famous, for he manifested more original genius in that line than even Captain Wirz himself ever displayed. We were marched through some of the finest streets in Savannah, and escape from the column was easy and tempting; but the swamps around the town were a more formidable guard than bayonets, and no one made the attempt. Reaching the railroad, which runs for some distance into the city, we were placed on board a train of cattle cars, and with sixty men in each car we started, bidding farewell to the quiet city of Savannah, of whose hospitality we had partaken at the

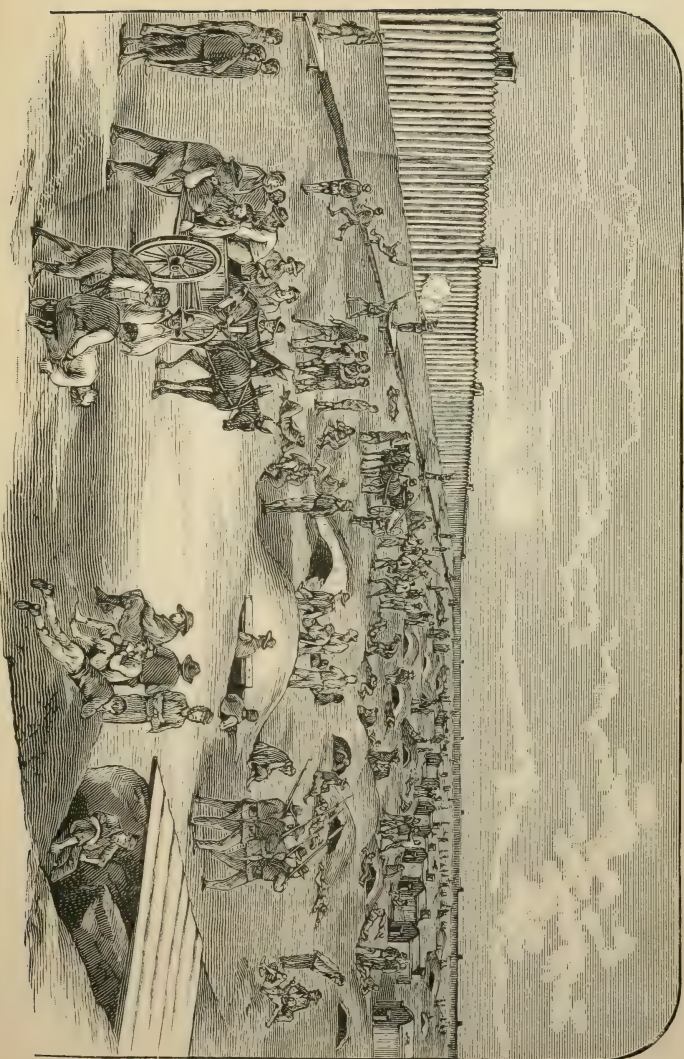


public expense, although it had been marred somewhat by the constraint which had been put upon our free movements about the town; and to Lieutenant Davis, who signalized his last moments of authority over us by riding down upon some helpless sick men who were trying to get aboard, in his anxiety to see us safely on our journey.

Starting from Savannah before sunrise, we reached Millen at five P. M. Although, as usual upon setting out, we had been regaled with a direct promise of exchange, that ingenious bit of pleasantry on the part of the Confederate government had lost much of its merit by constant repetition; indeed, it seemed as if the C. S. A. had exhausted its entire stock of wit in inventing that joke, for we never heard any other from it, and we fully appreciated its staleness. This plum, intended to insure our quiet removal from the prison at Savannah to the prison at Millen, failed in its designed office, for many of the boys jumped from the train while it was in motion, and although fired at by the guard succeeded in getting away for a time. Most of them, however, were retaken by means of the bloodhounds and brought back. It was undoubtedly a piece of reckless daring to jump from a railroad car while in motion, especially under fire of a dozen or more guards, in a strange country, with no knowledge of its geography, and with no means of obtaining it except by inquiry of residents, which would have been sure to lead to detection; but when life is the stake to be played for, there are few obstacles which men will not encounter to win it. Indeed, death by any other method than suicide would have been preferable to another winter's imprisonment in the Confederacy; and but for the hope of ultimate release, either by exchange or escape in a less desperate manner, the prisoners who were able to run would have overpowered the guard, seized the train, and rushed upon death at once.

We left the railroad some five miles beyond Millen junction, on the Augusta Railroad, and took up our line of march for the prison, situated about a mile distant in a south-west direction. The pen was an open inclosure like

that at Andersonville, being built of unhewn timbers set vertically in the ground; it contained about forty acres in area, in a nearly square form, and through it ran a stream of clear water, whose source was a beautiful spring just outside the walls. A battery of eight guns was planted in a large fort near the south-east corner of the pen, arranged to rake the inclosure diagonally in case of insurrection among the prisoners. The stockade was located in the midst of a pine forest, but all the timbers within it, except a narrow strip of small trees near the stream, as well as those for half a mile beyond the walls on either hand, had been cut down. At the time of the arrival of our party, which formed the second train load after the pen was "inaugurated," a large quantity of timber was lying upon the ground as it had been felled. The bodies of the trees had been cut into two or three pieces, and such of the logs as were fit for lumber hauled away, the remainder being left for the use of the prisoners. We lost no time in gathering the wood and carrying it to our quarters, and in three days the camp was pretty well cleared off; logs too heavy to be carried were rolled, and our wood piles assumed very respectable proportions. Those who could procure axes split some of these logs into slabs, and erected quite comfortable huts, which, though not models of excellence in architecture or neatness, were nevertheless a protection against the inclemency of the weather. It is to be remembered that the majority of the prisoners had been in the hands of the rebels more than a year, and that, in all that time, no new clothes had been given them, except what were issued at Danville and Richmond ten months previous. It was now October; the fall rains had set in; the ground, upon which we were compelled to lie, was saturated with water, often becoming a mere mud-puddle; and when the weather was pleasant for a few days, the night air was charged with moisture, and the heavy dews completely soaked through our scanty apparel. But few of the men had provided themselves with huts, for the reason that axes could be procured only with the greatest difficulty, the prison au-



PRISON PEN AT MILLEN, GEORGIA.





thorities furnishing none. Many dug holes in the ground, into which they crawled, burrowing in them as at Andersonville.

Our rations were two-thirds of a pint of corn-meal, three table-spoonfuls of rice, four ounces of fresh beef, including bone, and a tea-spoonful of salt. In lieu of rice, black peas or sorghum molasses were sometimes issued. A certain number of barrels of sorghum were allowed per week to the camp. In many of them the molasses had crystalized and adhered to the sides and bottom of the barrel, to the depth of three or four inches. This formed the most valuable part of the article, but Quartermaster Humes\* would not allow the prisoners this part of their ration, so that our supply was often cut off one-third from the little the Confederate government designed for us. The peas were filled with bugs, and at least one-half the amount allowed was utterly unfit for use. Refining somewhat upon our cookery at Andersonville, we placed our ration of peas in water before boiling it, when those that were worm-eaten, rising to the surface, were skimmed off and thrown away.

As at Camp Sumter, the hucksters soon made their appearance among us. Taffy, made from sorghum, sweet potatoes, tobacco, red pepper, thread, etc., purchased from the guards, formed the chief articles of sale; a thriving business was also done in soup and in corn and pea bread. As many of the prisoners had no cooking utensils or wood for fires, the more enterprising often realized a double ration, by exchanging the manufactured article for the raw material. Brick ovens had been built, and

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\* As nothing good can be said of this fellow, no mention was made of him in the account of the Andersonville prison, although he held the post of quartermaster at that place. He was a Baltimorean, and, like all deserters, was naturally predisposed to little acts of meanness, of which the above is an example. He made himself particularly obnoxious to the prisoners by first gaining the confidence of the unsuspecting, and placing them in the stocks in return. He had all the natural villainy of Captain Wirz, without sufficient intellectual vigor to carry it out, hence he confined himself to petty annoyances and little tricks.

two kettles for each one thousand men set in arches, but they were never used for cooking, because a supply of wood for the purpose was never provided by the quartermaster; and as the small amount obtained by the men was procured by private enterprise, none were willing to put their individual shares into a general fund for cooking the rations in a mass, to which, if such a course had been adopted, the contributions must have been very unequal.

A month's experience at "Camp Lawton" proved to us that our condition had been in nowise improved by the transfer from Andersonville. The exposure was rapidly thinning our numbers; our rations were not sufficient to support life for any extended period of time under the most favorable circumstances, and here, where no artificial heat could be obtained, the blood of the strong man became torpid, and refused to do its office. A hospital for receiving the sick was established in the north-west corner of the area, but no shelter was provided, no blankets given those who occupied it, and medicines were not issued there. The only advantage to the sick man in this arrangement was that he would be certain to be found by the surgeons, who were examining with reference to the special exchange. From this hospital those who were deemed unfit to stay in the stockade were transferred to a hospital outside the pen, where they remained until forwarded to the exchange point. Those who were not taken to the outer hospital were left to roam at will in the inclosure without medicine and with no other treatment than that afforded to the other prisoners. They died at an average rate of nine per cent per month. It was horrible to pass around the area at sunrise, and see the dead men who had expired the night before. Some of them had fallen upon the open space, and been unable to rise; others crawled wearily to the side of a stump, as if to be near some object, however inanimate, when the last agony came upon them; some sought the borders of the stream, perchance that its soft ripple might soothe the parting spirit with gentle music as it quitted the poor

tenement which had been its home; others forced themselves into the empty ovens and beneath the unused kettles, while still others burrowed themselves more deeply into the ground, digging their own graves, as they nestled down into the bosom of earth, for its genial warmth to shelter their freezing limbs from the beating storms; and when they were gathered up and removed for burial, their clenched hands still clung to the friendly breast that had cherished them, refusing to release their hold, and carrying the torn fragments with them to the tomb. And yet the dead, turning their glassy eyes upon us, as we passed, were not more horrible than the living, with their pinched faces, blue with cold, trembling as they hugged their almost naked forms with their bony arms, in a vain attempt to retain the heat which was not there, or collecting in groups to gather warmth from numbers, ever and anon changing places, that the outer circle might be relieved from the pinching cold, while those within assumed their places, to come back in turn. So these pale, haggard wretches, starved and froze day by day unnoticed, and were buried like brutes.

Hope of exchange had died within us; not a ray of light penetrated the thick gloom of the prospect before us. The only thought of the strong and healthy was by stout resistance to put off the evil day a little longer; but we felt that it must come soon to all of us, when the brief struggle would be over.

Confederate officers came daily into the pen to solicit recruits for their service. A few hundreds joined them, but their motives were well understood. They intended only to relieve their own personal sufferings, and if ever put in action at the front to desert. Though their services in the Confederate army boded no good for the rebel cause, the conduct of these men can hardly be justified. They had already passed many months in prison, had nearly "finished their course;" perhaps true courage would have refused the offer, and met death rather than disgrace. But what will not a man give for his life? Let us not judge

them too harshly, remembering how sorely they were tempted.

On the day of the presidential election, a ballot-box was opened, and some three thousand votes cast for Mr. Lincoln, and nearly a thousand for McClellan. The election passed off very much as elections usually do. The police were principally "Dimocrats," and exercised petty tyranny over the sick and helpless, who preferred Lincoln to "Little Mike," by knocking them down and beating them with their clubs. I make mention of these outrages only to show the character of the men who were willing to serve the Confederate cause. The police were a privileged class, serving their masters well. They were in league with those artisans who deserted their colors to labor in Confederate work-shops, and all true Irishmen will spurn them when they hear of the shame they have brought upon a brave, generous, and noble race.

The rebel authorities had large handbills struck, offering tempting terms to mechanics if they would come over to their side. These were posted upon the walls outside the pen. Had they been placed within it, they would have been torn down as insults. But few were drawn from their allegiance by this artifice. Taking all who were released as mechanics, and those who enlisted, they would not number three hundred men. The recruiting officers had honor enough to feel ashamed of their business, though they tried to hide it behind faces of brass.

I had offered my services, which had been accepted, early in November, to assist the surgeon in collecting the sick, and taking their names, etc., for the special exchange; and when the work was finished, one of the doctors had volunteered to use his influence to have me exchanged with the rest as a hospital attendant. On the 14th, while I was wandering about the camp, a friend ran hastily to me, announcing that I was desired to report immediately at the gate for exchange. Thinking that the doctor's promised efforts for my exchange had been crowned with success, and without stopping to look after my luggage, which consisted of an old haversack, several



cooking utensils, which I had made while waiting for the train at Opelika, and a small quantity of rations, ready to be "made up" for next morning's "trade," I rushed for the gate. I passed it "all right," and hurried up to headquarters under guard. Here I found several comrades, among them my old friend Beach, through whose kind offices my name had been brought to the commander's notice, and reporting myself, waited further orders. When the captain who commanded the post had allowed us to wait long enough to satisfy his dignity, he approached us, and administered the parole of honor, not to escape while on duty. This done, we were informed that, on account of so many prisoners being exchanged, the prison post was in want of men to work in the slaughter-house, and that we could take our choice between going there and working or going back into the prison. Although this did not look favorably toward an immediate release, we were not long in choosing, and were soon installed in business. I remained here four days. The business was not new to me, and in it I found something to relieve the terrible monotony of prison life. We slaughtered thirty-five head of cattle per day. The animals were small and very lean, averaging about three hundred and fifty pounds each. This, after deducting rations for the officers and guards, left about one-fourth of a pound per man per diem, including the bone, which in lean cattle bears a large proportion to the meat.

Sunday morning, the 20th of November, the captain sent down an orderly commanding us to report at once to head-quarters. A rumor had been put in circulation by the quidnuncs to the effect that those whose term of service had expired, and none others, were to be immediately exchanged, and that all who applied for exchange must take an oath to that effect. Acting upon this rumor, Beach would not go to head-quarters; but the rest of us went. When we reached the office, the captain said: "Now, boys, there are twenty-five of you, twelve of whom can go on this exchange this afternoon. I want to be fair and honorable in deciding who shall stay." He then put

twenty-five ballots, upon twelve of which was written the word "go," the remainder being blanks, into a hat. These being well shaken, we advanced as our names were called and drew our fate. It was a curious as well as an impressive scene to watch the shifting shades upon the swarthy faces of these ragged, dirty men, as each advanced with trembling hand and bated breath, and to see the eagerness with which each watched the other as he called the magic word with exulting heart or crept hopelessly back to his place with the fearful blank in his hand. Every fortunate ticket was counted as it was drawn, and the diminished or increased odds more carefully noted than ever mortal watched the fatal wheel of fortune; for life itself was now at stake. Home, friends, plenty, existence; prison, neglect, starvation, death; these were the alternatives. Upon those bits of paper, not an inch in surface, hung all our future. The strong men who had faced death upon twenty fields, had marched with scornful pride to the cannon's mouth, had met unflinching the stern charge and hurled back the recoiling foe; men who had famished for fourteen weary months, exposed to storms without shelter, to pestilence without the means of warding it off or escaping from it, and never murmured—wept like children over the bit of white paper that lay in their hands. Nerves strong as steel, strained to their utmost tension by the hope of release, suddenly relaxed as the new-born hope expired, and became soft and weak as




those of a babe. My name was the last upon the list, and all the world's goods would not tempt me again to undergo the agony of suspense with which I watched the drawing of those ballots. The revulsion of feeling I experienced when the little

paper, being opened, revealed the word "go," overpow-

ered me, and I stood entranced, unable to move, as one in a fearful nightmare, till a desperate effort forced a loud shout from my lips, and I was free. The gloomy prison, with its train of hideous experiences, its specters of woe, wretchedness, and death, vanished. The very air seemed laden with vivifying fragrance, bearing health, life, upon its wings. A new world was opened to my eyes—a beautiful world, where every bough dropped healing balm and every hill seemed a paradise.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

PAROLED—REBEL TRUCE BOATS—ON BOARD SHIP—HOME-  
WARD BOUND—NORTHERN SOIL—FURLOUGHED—VIEWS OF  
THE PRISONERS—TABLES—CONCLUSION.



IN the afternoon of the same day, we were paroled; while this was going on, a citizen came in with the news that General Kilpatrick's cavalry, forming the right of Sherman's advance, was near Macon, tearing up the railroad and devastating the surrounding country. This news, together with our new "situation," made us jubilant, and three cheers, long and loud, rent the air. We left Millen, and about 8,000 prisoners, just as twilight was deepening into night, reaching Savannah at daylight the next morning. A rain storm had set in about midnight, and heavy clouds still hung about the sky, dropping their chilling burden upon our unprotected persons, as we disembarked from the train into the streets of the city. Many of the prisoners still doubted the sincerity of the exchange, and believed that we were again being removed from Millen to a more secure pen; but to the better informed, the nature of the parole, which was the same as that given to those who had been sent through our lines at the front, just after a battle, was sufficient evidence of its verity.

The first train load of prisoners which had passed through Savannah for the fleet, had been so well treated by the citizens, who had distributed many comforts and little luxuries among the half starved men, that, upon our arrival, guards of infantry and cavalry had been stationed on both sides of the street, and, indeed, marched by our sides to the levee, to prevent any little outbursts of tender-hearted sympathy which might be exhibited in our behalf. Whether the Confederate authorities feared kind-



ness would, from its novelty, have an injurious effect upon the prisoners, or that the exercise of charity would quench the far-famed fire which had been so often kindled in the southern heart, did not transpire; bayonets and cavalry swords effectually repressed every attempt at making the experiment, to prove which of the two hypotheses was correct. Reaching the levee, near the city gas-works, the column halted for an hour, in the cold mist that had settled down upon the river, waiting the transports that were to convey us to Venus Point, where our fleet lay at anchor. But the storm, and the cold, and the hunger, were all forgotten, or unnoticed, in the exulting feelings which animated our breasts. The hour seemed an age to our impatient spirits. I have read of philosophers, who have remained calm and collected, and coolly observant of "things," amid the sudden and unlooked for transitions of fortune, manifesting no emotion of joy or grief by so much as a change of muscle or a sparkle of the eye; but, however desirable such control of nerves, or such stolidity, whichever it is, that can wear an air of indifference on all occasions, may be, it was an accomplishment far below par with us at that time; and I am inclined to the belief that those same stoics would be completely cured of their insensibility by a return to liberty after a year spent in southern military prisons. It would scatter the dusty proverbs of their philosophical theories to the winds. And if any devotee of indifference doubts the practicability of this view, let him try it; the experiment would be a complete test.

Two small river boats were moored to the levee where we halted, with steam up, waiting for the signal to take us on board and move forward. Dignity and red tape being at last satisfied, the flag of truce boat "*Beauregard*" steamed past, with the white flag at the mast-head. Instantly we were ordered to embark, and in a few minutes were in motion, following our leader in line down the stream. We rapidly passed the rib work of a new iron-clad, which forcibly reminded us of our own skeleton appearance, and saw the numerous torpedoes lying in wait to

blow the Yankee gun-boats into—the surrounding country, upon the shortest notice, if they should dare to pass up the stream. The presence of these formidable machines was revealed by sharp pointed timbers attached to them, and inclining down the stream. Three of these “sharp sticks” were observed close together in one locality. There was a large fort and extensive earth-works on the right bank, near the “obstructions,” bristling with cannon, so trained as to crush any hostile fleet that attempted to pass them. I counted thirty-six heavy siege guns, as we passed through the obstructions alone. In addition to these shore batteries, two heavy iron-clads, like twin Cerberi, guarded the passage through the obstructions. It seemed to us, though we were landsmen, to be sure, that it would be utterly impossible for our fleet to ascend the river past these batteries, and that the attempt to do so, would insure the almost instantaneous destruction of every vessel that made it.

We reached our fleet, which was anchored at Venus Point, at two p. m., and were kept in waiting two hours, before all the preliminaries were settled, when we were transferred to the steamer “Star of the South.” The rebel transports, having discharged their burden, turned about and steamed up the river, the cloud of black smoke growing smaller and smaller, finally disappearing in the distance. It was not until these vessels had vanished around the bend of the stream that we felt ourselves free; and the loved flag, which floated so proudly over our heads, assured us that this indeed was no error. I had been under the guard of rebel bayonets just four hundred and twenty-six days; had passed over more than three thousand miles of railroad; had been confined in five different prisons; it is no wonder, therefore, that, as I turned my eyes from those filthy rebels and their dirty vessels to the neat uniforms and clean deck of the stately ship on board of which we then stood, and noted the contrast, I felt as if I had discovered a new race of beings, a higher order of existence, than I had ever known before; and I doubt if Columbus and his crew were more joyful, when

they landed upon the new hemisphere, than we were in embarking upon a United States vessel. The next morning, we were placed on board the screw steamer "General Sedgwick," and, at five P. M., moved down the river, past Fort Pulaski, and onward into the open sea. The wind had blown all day from the ocean, and was increasing in force as we passed out of sight of land into darkness. Our "rocking in the cradle of the deep" that night, will never be forgotten by the "land lubbers" that were taking free passage to the North. Our acrobatics certainly possessed a high order of merit. Somersaults were so frequent that the beholders lost all interest in them, while constant standing upon our heads would have certainly produced vertigo, if there had not been as constant a change to an upright position.

The next morning found the good ship tossing and tumbling about on the billows, and the wind seemed to us to have increased to a hurricane. The sailors, however, lounged about with such unconcern as to convey the idea to us that it was but a zephyr; and if we had had any fears of going to the bottom, their *sang froid* would have put them to flight. The storm subsided during the day, and it continued fair for the remainder of the voyage. As we passed the straits, and entered Chesapeake Bay, we saw the fleet preparing for the expedition against Fort Fisher. When opposite Point Lookout, we could plainly descry the high wall of a military prison, where the captured rebels were held, and the cloud of smoke that hovered over the spot indicated that they had no lack of fuel, whatever other articles of necessity they might be deprived of.

Reaching the harbor, at Annapolis, about midnight, we cast anchor, and waited for daylight before proceeding to the dock. Here we were received by a band of music, playing the "Star Spangled Banner;" the sick were placed in ambulances, while the well men marched to the barracks, within the city limits. Here facilities were furnished for bathing, a process with which we had been long unacquainted; new clothing was issued, in exchange



for the filthy rags we had so long worn. As soon as the necessary acts of cleanliness were performed, the boys, having procured stationery and ink, were soon busy inditing letters to their friends, announcing their arrival in a land of civilization and Christianity. And many a loving heart was made glad by the tidings that the dear one, mourned as lost, was once more near.

From the barracks we were removed, the next day, to parole camp, some two miles beyond the city limits, on the Baltimore and Annapolis Railroad. Here the same kind attention was paid us as we had received from the moment we stepped on board the steamer, near Fort Pulaski. The officers and attendants of the camp seemed to vie with each other in their efforts to minister to our wants. Anxious friends came seeking for loved ones, but many, very many, turned away sad and disappointed from a fruitless search. The United States Sanitary and Christian Commissions deserve a lasting praise for their generous and welcome aid, in furnishing us with stationery, clothing, and a great variety of necessary articles, which the government could not give. After two or three days' stay at this camp, the Secretary of War issued an order that we be furloughed for thirty days. Two months pay was given us, and the necessary papers for the commutation of rations. On the 8th of December, I received my furlough, and immediately started for home, where I arrived on the 11th. Here, surrounded by friends and plenty, I rested, after fourteen months experience in rebel prisons.

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Although my narrative, were it exclusively a personal one, would properly end here, my task would be incomplete without a somewhat more particular account of the feelings and opinions of the prisoners themselves in regard to the course pursued by our own government in the matter of exchange.

It was understood why the exchange was dropped in the first instance, but it was believed that the policy which



caused the old cartel to be abrogated was wrong from the beginning. We admitted that the negro soldier was entitled to the same protection as the white man, and should have received it; but, to insure this to him, it was not necessary to insist upon no exchange at all. A system of retaliation could have been devised by which a body of rebels, equal in number to the negro prisoners, could have been subjected to the same treatment as the blacks received, and there would have been still enough to exchange man for man for the white Federals; for, after the exchange was abandoned, there was at all times a surplus of prisoners in the hands of the Federal government. If this system had been proffered by Mr. Stanton, and declined by the rebels, even in that case, it would have removed from our minds the impression that we were left to bear our tortures unpitied and uncared for, and nerved us to greater endurance. But we seemed to be forgotten. When the rebel lines closed around us on the field of conflict, we appeared to enter a horrible abyss, and no thought from those whom we left behind followed us. We found an earthly hell, and oblivion rolled between us and those we had been separated from.

But it was more galling to our spirits than this seeming neglect—than the superhuman sufferings we endured—to feel that, while we starved, our enemies fattened under the government which had abandoned us; for we well knew that no motives of humanity would induce those placed over us to mitigate our condition, that no sympathy from them would alleviate our wretchedness one iota; nothing, in short, would induce them to treat us like human beings but actual fear of experiencing torments like those inflicted upon us. It was understood among us that when rebels were captured they were treated as prisoners of war are treated among civilized nations, and, so long as this was continued, there was no hope for us. We felt that they had a fell purpose in view which they would persist in carrying out until they were *compelled* by retaliation to abandon it. The declaration made by the officers at Danville, that “we now have them where, with the severity of the climate and

*harsh treatment, nature will do its work faster than the bullet,"* followed by the continued acts of barbarity which were inflicted upon Federal prisoners subsequent to that declaration, were sufficient evidence to us that our fate was the result of design on the part of the Confederate government. For, by this means alone, during the year from October, 1863, to October, 1864, at least 50,000 men were rendered incapable of ever bearing arms; if the contest could be prolonged for a number of years, at this rate of destruction, nature would indeed do the work, and there would be no need of the bullet.

It was rumored among us that Mr. Stanton had reported, as one reason why the exchange was not re-opened, that to give a strong, healthy rebel, ready to be put into the field the moment he had passed our lines, for a naked, half-starved skeleton, emaciated by disease, exposure, and starvation, and incapable of ever again serving in the army, was not an equal exchange. This logic seemed hard to us, for we believed the rumor to be true. If the prisoners held in the North had been the only means in the command of the rebels for filling the ranks of their now depleted armies, we should have submitted to our wretched condition without a murmur, thinking we were still serving our country. Or if, on the other hand, the prisoners in the power of the rebels had been necessary to keep our armies full to the maximum, we should have considered the reputed statement of the Secretary of War as being less oppressive. But even if an able-bodied rebel had been exchanged for a loyal "skeleton," and the latter discharged from further service, there was an able-bodied northern man to take his place; so that, even in this view, the "statement" was without good and sufficient reason to support it. We did not believe it to be just that we, who had stood like a wall of fire upon our borders, that those whom we protected might live in the midst of plenty, enjoying a prosperity almost without a parallel in the history of the country, should suffer death inch by inch because we had become so reduced in health and strength as to be incapable of further military

service. Neither did we consider those left behind, engaged in the peaceful pursuits of civil life, to be under less obligation than ourselves to defend a government as much their own as ours. Surely, if they were not willing to make the sacrifice, if there were not men enough at home with sufficient patriotism to offset the balance which might be made against us by exchanges, while the population of the North was so much greater than that of the South, the Republic was a failure and not worth preserving.

It was urged by some of the prisoners that it would have been wrong for the United States to adopt retaliatory measures, because the prisoners in its hands were innocent men, in no way accountable for the cruelties we were made to suffer. So were we innocent men, said the other side, personally innocent of any crime against the Confederate States. Yet we were held to suffer for the act of our government in carrying on war. Why should not they suffer in the same manner?

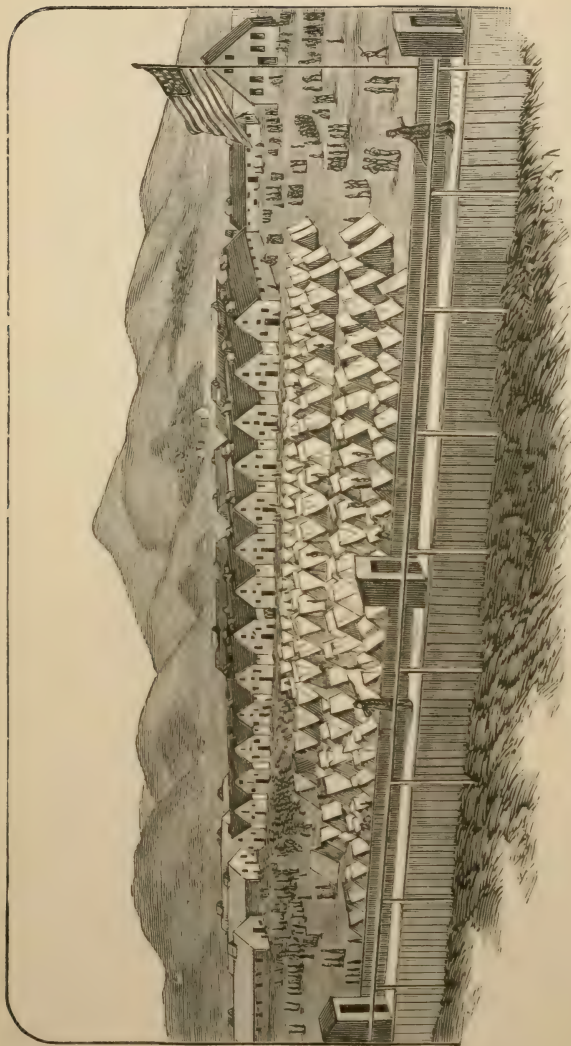
Every tree is known by its fruit; and judging the policy of the system of non-exchange by this standard, we believe it to be a complete failure. All the prisoners whose opinions were entitled to consideration believed our government to be animated with a desire to do what was for the best in the premises. But at the same time, they did not fail to criticize its acts, while they admitted the purity of its motives. The experiment of non-exchange and non-retaliation cost the lives of fifty thousand as good and true men as ever faced a hostile cannon, more than the half of whom might have been saved and returned to duty.

It is useless to urge that the rebels had no supplies with which to feed and clothe us, in palliation of their barbarity; for food, if not material for clothing, existed in abundance. There was no reason for their stripping us of our clothing when we were captured, or of *stealing* the supplies sent us at Danville. They might have provided shelter against the storms and the heat, as well as wood for fuel. They might have imprisoned us in other places than swamps,









PRISON FOR REBELS AT ELMIRA, NEW YORK.

I have taken great pains to ascertain the exact amount and kinds of rations issued at Camps Douglas and Chase, and at other places, where large numbers of rebel prisoners have been confined during the war. I have received statements from several reliable persons, in reply to letters soliciting information upon the subject, and believe what is set down in the above tables to be true. As regards the allowance afforded by the rebels, I am able to vouch for it myself, having many times weighed and measured what I so often divided among twenty-five men; and there are thousands of living witnesses, in the various parts of the United States, who will corroborate my statement.

Not only was no clothing issued to us, but even a portion of that we had when captured was taken from us. The supplies sent through the lines while we were at Danville were in part kept back, and of those who received a portion, the majority exchanged it for eatables with rebel sutlers, in anticipation of a speedy exchange—an anticipation excited by rumors set afloat by rebel agencies. It was well known that half-starved men would part with any thing they possessed in return for food, particularly when they believed that a few days, at most, would put them into a situation to obtain a new supply; hence the frequent rumors of exchange, until all our clothing was in rebel hands.

The following extracts from a report submitted by Brigadier-General Barnes, in command of prisoners' camp at Point Lookout, are presented without comment:

“OFFICE OF A. C. S. OF PRISONERS OF WAR.

“POINT LOOKOUT, MD., *April 15, 1865.*

“Prisoners of war, in accordance with general order No. 1, of Brigadier-General H. W. Wessels, commissary-general of prisoners, dated Washington, January 13, 1865, are now allowed the following rations, viz.: Pork or bacon, ten ounces (in lieu of beef); salt or fresh beef, fourteen ounces; flour or soft bread, sixteen ounces; hard

bread, ten ounces (in lieu of flour or soft bread); corn meal, sixteen ounces (in lieu of flour or bread).

To one hundred rations: Beans or peas, twelve and one-half pounds; or rice or hominy, eight pounds; soap, two pounds; vinegar, two quarts; salt, two pounds; which rations are of the same quality as those issued to the United States troops, and are drawn by the assistant commissary of subsistence of prison camp, from post commissary, on requisition for the number of prisoners in camp, and re-issued to each mess-house in bulk, there to be cooked in large boilers made for the purpose, and served out to the prisoners thus: Each cook-house, of which there are seven, originally intended to feed one thousand men per diem, being able to accommodate five hundred at a time, is now made to furnish food for two thousand and upwards, is under the charge of two sergeants, one to superintend the cooking of the rations, and the other (both are prisoners) the serving of them out. The camp being laid out in divisions of a thousand men each, is so arranged that each cook-house, as far as practicable, shall feed two divisions twice a day, and to avoid any confusion, each division furnishes to the cook-house where it gets its food daily the number of men present, which must agree with the number stated on the morning the report is made to the provost marshal.

“Bread is delivered each noon for the twenty-four hours succeeding to the sergeants in charge of companies of one hundred men, who issue it to the men they have in charge. Each day at dinner the prisoners received a large cup of bean or pea soup, and in the morning received the ration of beef or pork, as stated. They are marched up by companies to the number of five hundred at a time to each cook-house, and eat the rations prepared for them, and set on long tables, out of tin-ware, which is always kept clean and bright.

“Every care is taken to keep the cook-houses perfectly clean and the food properly cooked and served. Once each week the provost marshal inspects the houses, and the medical officer of the day inspects the food daily.



The assistant commissary of subsistence of prison camp visits each house daily, and is strict in seeing that food, utensils, and houses are kept clean, and that each of the employes attends to his duty.

"Sugar and coffee or tea are issued to the sick and wounded, in conformity to General Order No. 1, above referred to, in the manner therein specified.

"Prisoners employed on public works are allowed the following rations, viz.:

"Pork or bacon, 12 ounces (in lieu of beef); salt or fresh beef, 16 ounces; flour or soft bread, 18 ounces; hard bread, 12 ounces (in lieu of flour or soft bread); corn meal, 18 ounces (in lieu of flour or bread).

"Per one hundred rations: Beans or peas, 15 pounds; rice or hominy, 10 pounds (in lieu of beans or peas); coffee (ground), 5 pounds; coffee (green), 7 pounds (in lieu of ground coffee); tea, 16 ounces (in lieu of coffee); sugar, 12 pounds; vinegar, 3 quarts; soap, 4 pounds; salt,  $3\frac{1}{4}$  pounds; which they receive in the following manner: These prisoners receive daily, in the same way that other prisoners do at the cook-houses, the same rations that are issued to the bulk of the prisoners, and once every ten days the assistant commissary of subsistence of the camp issues to the sergeant of each detailed squad the difference between the ration already received and the allowance as above. The sergeants in charge of details then divide this surplus equally between the men under them. There are about one thousand men employed on public works, viz., 350 on fortifications, and 650 by the post quartermaster.

"Soft bread is almost invariably furnished; in fact, hard bread has never been issued, except to prisoners arriving at this depot too late to have bread baked at the bakery on the point. In all instances the rations are fresh and good, and are the same in quality as those issued to the United States troops. Every care is taken to have the rations (and they are) fairly served out, and especial care is taken to have them properly cooked and prepared.

Rations are now issued to about 19,500 prisoners, exclusive of those in hospitals.

“Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“C. H. WHITTEMOORE,

*“Lieutenant and A. C. S. of Prisoners of War.*

“BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES K. BARNES,

*“Commanding District St. Mary’s, Point Lookout, Md.”*

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“PRISONERS’ HOSPITAL,

“POINT LOOKOUT, MD., April 15, 1865.

“GENERAL:—In compliance with your request, I have the honor to submit the following report, regarding the medical treatment of prisoners of war under your command:

“The camp is divided into divisions of one thousand men each; each division is under the charge of volunteer medical officers from among the prisoners, whose duty it is to treat those slightly sick in quarters, and report all serious cases to the United States medical officers in charge of all the divisions of camp, for examination, with reference to their admission into hospital.

“A daily sick call is held in each company, the same as in regiments of our own troops.

“The hospital proper consists of nine large wooden wards, each ward having sixty hospital beds complete.

“In addition to these wards, there are sixty hospital tents, floored, and with beds.

“There are separate and detached wards for measles, erysipelas, and other contagious diseases. The hospital for small-pox is located one mile from the prisoners’ camp and hospital.

“The medicines drawn for the use of the prisoners are of the same kind and quantity as issued to our own troops at military posts.

“The diet of the sick is the same as in United States general hospitals for the treatment of our own sick. The savings on the army rations constitute the hospital fund,

and is expended the same as in other hospitals, in the purchase of articles of extra diet for the sick, such as butter, cheese, milk, corn starch, farina, vermicelli, macaroni, soda crackers, eggs, apples, onions, and such other vegetables as the market affords; the amount thus expended from July, 1864, to March, 1865, inclusive, being fourteen thousand, four hundred and forty-eight dollars and six cents.

“Large issues of clothing have been made to prisoners coming to the hospital in a destitute and suffering condition.

“A large percentage of the sick treated have been those received from the front in a feeble condition, or coming from other parts. Especially is this true of scurvy, and diseases of scorbutic and malarial origin.

“Accompanying this report is a copy of the general summary of monthly report of sick and wounded, with a tabular list of the most common diseases and deaths, by which it will be seen that, with an average of nine thousand three hundred and seventy-four (9,374) prisoners per month, from July, 1864, to March, 1865, inclusive, there were one hundred and forty-seven deaths monthly, being a ratio of fifteen and seven-hundredths per one thousand men. From September, 1863, to June, 1864, inclusive, with an average of seven thousand four hundred and ninety-one (7,491) prisoners per month, there were sixty-two deaths, monthly, being a ratio of eight and four-tenths per one thousand men.

“The prevailing diseases are diarrhea, dysentery, remittent, intermittent, and typhoid fevers, pneumonia, and scurvy.

“I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“J. H. THOMPSON,

“*Surgeon U. S. V. in Charge.*

“BRIGADIER-GENERAL J. BARNES, *Commanding.*”

*Gross amount of articles purchased from hospital fund for extra diet from July, 1864, to March, 1865, inclusive.*

Butter .....	lbs.	6,087
Cheese.....	lbs.	5,107
Con. milk.....	doz.	276
Eggs .....	doz.	2,976
Soda crackers.....	bbls.	189
Apples.....	bbls.	50
Farina.....	lbs.	1,782
Corn starch.....	doz.	177
Macaroni .....	lbs.	3,000
Vermicelli .....	lbs.	3,000
Pearl barley.....	lbs.	2,498
Onions.....	bbls.	77
Turnips and other vegetables.....	bbls.	348

“I certify that the above is a true statement, compiled from the monthly statement of hospital fund for the months included above.

J. H. THOMPSON,

*“Surgeon U. S. V. in Charge.”*

“HEAD-QUARTERS DISTRICT OF ST. MARY’S,

“PROVOST MARSHAL’S OFFICE,

“POINT LOOKOUT, MD., April 19, 1865.

“GENERAL :—In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to report the manner in which the prisoners-of-war camps are conducted at this post:

“The prisoners are divided into divisions of one thousand each, in charge of a non-commissioned officer detailed for that purpose from regiments doing duty at this post, and again divided into companies of one hundred each, in charge of a non-commissioned officer selected from the prisoners, who are held responsible for the cleanliness and good behavior of the prisoners under their charge.



On the arrival of prisoners, they are required to deliver to the provost marshal, for safe-keeping, all moneys and valuables in their possession. Each package is marked with the owner's name, regiment, and company, and is so registered and returned to them when leaving for exchange or discharge. Of the available currency a book is furnished them, upon which they are allowed to purchase from the sutler such articles as are allowed by the commissary-general of prisoners. Any money sent them during their confinement is placed to their credit in the same manner. Letters are allowed to be written and received by the prisoners, and when examined, if found unexceptionable, are immediately delivered. They are allowed to receive from their friends, 'upon a permit from the provost marshal,' such articles of clothing as they may require, provided that they are of the proper quality and color.

"The prisoners are comfortably quartered in Sibley tents, wedge tents, and wooden structures covered by shelter tents. The camps are thoroughly inspected every Sunday morning, and the prisoners paraded in by divisions, each man with his blanket, and any found in a filthy condition are required to bathe and wash themselves and clothing at once. For this purpose they are allowed free access to the shore in rear of the camp on the Chesapeake Bay. The camps are thoroughly policed daily, and the sanitary condition is fully equal, if not superior, to any regiment of our own troops in the field.

"Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

"A. G. BRADY,

"*Major and Provost Mar. in Charge of Prisoners of War.*

"BRIGADIER-GENERAL JAMES BARNES,

"*Commanding District St. Mary's, Point Lookout, Md.*"

The number of reported deaths per month for the eleven months beginning March 1, 1864, and ending Febru-

ary 1, 1865, at Camp Sumter, Andersonville, was as follows:

March .....	278	First six days of Sept.....	576
April.....	544	Balance of Sept. and Oct....	3,719
May .....	699	November.....	494
June .....	1,291	December.....	170
July.....	1,733	January, 1865.....	199
August.....	2,990		
		Total.....	12,693

Sixty-four of this number died of small-pox.

From the 1st of July, 1864, to the 1st of January, 1865, the prisoners at Andersonville died at the rate of twelve per cent per month. During my imprisonment at Danville, where some four thousand men were confined, four hundred and seventy died, making an average rate of about two-thirds per cent per month. At Millen and Savannah, our prisoners died at the rate of nine per cent per month. The total number of deaths at Belle Island, for the quarter ending March 30, 1864, was one thousand three hundred and ninety-six. On the other hand, at Camps Chase and Douglas, there were about eighteen thousand men confined, out of which, it is said, one hundred and thirty, or about thirteen-eightieths per cent, died per month on an average. In one day, at Andersonville, one hundred and twenty-seven bodies were deposited in the dead-house!

How is this enormous discrepancy in the lists of mortality to be accounted for? It can not be on the ground that the Federal prisoners were of less robust constitution than the rebels, for the system of non-exchange was not adopted till nearly all the regiments in our army had been in the field for at least a year, during which time those who were physically incapable of enduring the ordinary hardships of military life had been "weeded out" of the ranks, and sent home or detailed; neither was it because of the climate alone, although the malaria filling the atmosphere of the swamps in which we were placed undoubtedly had a baleful influence on our health, for in many districts

as far south as Andersonville, where our troops were stationed, no such results followed. There can be but one answer to the question: Disease induced by the poverty of the food; in short, starvation.

Above I have given data from three of the prisons; eleven more are yet to be accounted for. And when the great record is made up, there is no doubt it will show that from January, 1864, to January, 1865, thirty thousand men were swept into the grave, and twenty thousand more physically disabled for life by this atrocious treatment; men as brave and true as ever fought for sacred truth and justice, suffering martyrdom by the most horrible tortures ingenious human fiends could devise, for no crime save that of striving to maintain the rights their fathers bequeathed them.

Those who were engaged in this wholesale slaughter of helpless men have denied the charges presented in this and similar accounts. Official reports have been referred to, to show that the tale has been falsely colored. A little insight into the manner of keeping the medical reports will show *their* fallacy as a basis upon which to found a correct opinion of the facts. Had the war closed by treaty, a final adjustment would have been made, by which the number of prisoners taken could have been compared with the number returned, when the terrible list of mortality would have been disclosed. But it will never be known how many brave men have paid the last penalty through the barbarity of their captors, and a search for the truth among official records will be fruitless. The surgeon's report was made weekly and returned to Richmond, showing the number under medical treatment, the number in hospital, the number in camp receiving medicine, the number discharged in camp, the number discharged from the hospital, and the number of the dead. A summary of these reports was occasionally made up and returned to the authorities at Washington. An order was issued by Captain Wirz requiring all who were sick to report daily at the sick-call, or no medicines would be issued to them. Every one who reported at sick-call, ac-

according to the previous rule, must be personally examined by the surgeon before receiving his prescription. It had been the custom to require "standing" cases to be reported only occasionally, since the disease (scurvy) demanded the same treatment daily for months, or until it was cured. To these men the clerks had been accustomed to carry the proper medicine as the patient needed it, both to save time and to relieve the surgeons of a part of their herculean labors. It would have been impossible, under the new order, to examine all these cases personally in one day (there were more than nine hundred obtaining medicine from the surgeon I attended), and, if that had been possible, the same remedies would have been prescribed day by day. Captain Wirz knew this, and confidently anticipated the result which followed. Six hundred and fifty patients, who had daily received medicines at my surgeon's stand, were discharged and their names struck from the list of the sick. They were returned on the surgeon's report as cured—no other return could be made—when, in fact, the little medicine which they had been in the habit of receiving had merely been the means of counteracting the effects of the disease, and not of eradicating it; as soon as the medicine was withdrawn, they grew rapidly worse, and many of them died.

The awful reality of the torments inflicted upon the unfortunate victims of this war in rebel hands can never be known, except by those who survived it. The constant craving of the appetite from day to day and from month to month; the continued exposure to the scorching sun and drizzling rains, destitute of clothing and shelter; lying upon the wet ground, and inhaling the poisonous air arising from the swamp, infected as it was with the stench of decaying flesh that was dropping from living bodies by our side as we slept; covered with vermin, that crawled in myriads over our persons in spite of constant vigilance; the complete isolation; the absence of employment for mind or body; the dismal recurrence of horrible scenes day after day; the despair of release, or an improvement in our condition; the dreary sense of desertion and deso-



lation — all these made up a picture of horror which no pen can describe, no pencil depict.

In the foregoing pages the half has not been told; indeed, my pen has tried to soften the dreadful picture as much as possible. But what is written is truth, every word, unyielding truth. The following description of the transfer of the prisoners from Millen and Andersonville to the United States steamer, "Star of the South," at the time I was exchanged, was written by an employe of the sanitary commission, on board the vessel. Although the incidents there related did not come to my notice, others of a similar character were known to me at the time, and I do not hesitate to say the account is in no particular overdrawn:

"No human tongue or pen can ever describe the horrible sufferings we have witnessed this day (Nov. 20th). I was early at the landing, at half past eight o'clock in the morning, before the boat threw out her ropes for security. The first one brought two hundred bad cases, which the naval surgeon told me should properly go to the hospital near by, were it not that others were coming, every one of whom was in the most wretched condition imaginable.

. . . . .

"In a short time, another boat load drew near, and, oh! such a scene of suffering humanity I desire never to behold again. The whole deck was a bed of straw for our exhausted, starved, emaciated, dying fellow-creatures. Of the five hundred and fifty that left Savannah, the surgeon informed me, not over two hundred would survive; fifty had died on the passage; three died while the boat was coming to the land of liberty. I saw five men dying as they were carried on stretchers from the boat to the naval hospital.

. . . . .

"Some had become insane; their wild gaze and clenched teeth convinced the observer that reason had fled; others were idiotic; a few were lying in spasms; perhaps the realization of the hope long cherished, yet oft deferred, or the welcome sound of the music sent forth by the military

band, was more than their exhausted natures could bear. When blankets were thrown over them, no one would have supposed that a human form lay beneath, save for the small prominence which the bony head and feet indicated. Oh, God of Justice! what retribution awaits the perpetrators of such slow and awful murder.

“The hair of some was matted together, like beasts of the stall which lie down in their own filth. Vermin were over them in abundance. Nearly every man was darkened by scurvy, or black with rough scales, and with scorbutic sores. One in particular was reduced to the merest skeleton; his face, neck, and feet covered with thick green mold. A number who had government clothes given them on the boat were too feeble to put them on; and were carried ashore partially dressed, hugging their clothing with a death grasp that they could not be persuaded to yield. It was not infrequent to hear a man feebly call as he was laid on a stretcher, ‘Don’t take my clothes;’ ‘Oh! save my new shoes;’ ‘Don’t let my socks go back to Andersonville.’ In their wild death struggle, with bony arms and hands extended, they would hold up their new socks, that could not be put on because of their swollen limbs, saying, ‘Save ’em till I get home.’ In a little while, however, the souls of many were released from their worn-out frames, and borne to that higher home, where all things are registered for a great day of account.”

Another gentleman, writing of the condition of the prisoners taken to Wilmington, North Carolina, who had been exchanged, says:

“After nerving myself for the visit, and trying to picture all the horrors while riding slowly over the half mile to the house where they had been collected, my brain reeled for the moment, as the sickening reality burst upon me. Officers came in, and those who had never quailed on the field of death, whose cheeks had never blanched, there stood aghast, with tears in their eyes, grinding their teeth, clenching their hands, and thanking God that there was a hell. Pale, haggard, and emaciated skeletons glared

on us from glassy eyes, where the light of reason was just expiring. With matted hair and skin blackened with pine smoke, scarcely covered with the filthiest shreds of cast-off rebel clothing, without blankets, and most of them without coats or shoes, they gazed at us with an almost idiotic stare, while the majority could, with difficulty, be roused from their listlessness. Many had forgotten their names; some could be aroused, and their memories quickened, by asking them of their homes, their wives, and their children—these magic words bringing them back from the grave into which they were sinking so fast. Many were dying of starvation, with their hands clutching the bread our soldiers had brought them.”

It is useless to multiply such scenes as these; they occurred at every exchange point, and at every arrival of a load of prisoners; northern papers have circulated accounts of them over the entire country. But if the appearance of a few hundred was so terrible to an occasional witness, what must have been the emotions of those to whom, for three months, it was a daily occurrence to behold thousands in the same condition? And what must be the feelings of the survivors against the perpetrators of these enormities?

Greater crimes never lay at the door of any people, civilized or savage, than were perpetrated by the Confederate government upon helpless prisoners of war. From the first battle of Bull Run till the last guerrilla fight of the war, it was their custom to rob their captives of their clothing, and when their cause grew hopeless under constant defeat, they turned their pitiless rage against their helpless foes. The great crime which sent our President to his bloody grave, whether by the sanction of the rebel rulers, or not, was the legitimate offspring of the same spirit as doomed us to slow and terrible death. Our condition must have been known to the Richmond authorities, for the medical reports revealed it; yet for fourteen months we suffered, and were only relieved when fear of Sherman and his invincible army compelled them to move

us. It seems useless to give trial to the subordinates in these fearful assassinations, and to allow the chief offenders to go unpunished, for they were only carrying out the orders of their superiors in command in their full scope and spirit; rather let the infamous plotters of these deeds also suffer—the men whose word alone, had it been spoken, could have changed our condition from death to life; the commanders of their armies, the head of their nation. These are the guilty parties; all others were but willing accessories.

The survivors of all these atrocities have returned—a band of heroes and martyrs for Liberty's sake—and it remains to be seen what adequate return will be made to them for their sufferings. Nobly have our soldiers fought and nobly died upon the bloody field, to save our beloved country from destruction. All honor to their holy memory. But these have sacrificed more than life, for they bear about them seeds of disease, which will render that life painful and wretched while it is prolonged, ekeing out a miserable existence through years, it may be, of physical torture, crippled and maimed, till the grave, most welcome, shall receive their "last of earth."

To the memory of the illustrious dead, whose feebler bodies yielded to the dreadful tortures, let monuments of marble and granite rise, to record the holy sacrifice; to tell to the pilgrim, as he visits those fields of blood where they lie interred, the horrid tale of barbarity to which they fell victims, and to show to coming generations the terrible sufferings, the heroic endurance, the unflinching fortitude, with which their ancestors met and vanquished the rebellious enemies of their great and noble and happy country.

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The foregoing narrative was written before Captain Wirz was arrested by the Union authorities, and tried for cruelty to prisoners of war. A brief outline of the circumstances connected with his arrest and trial is made as



a fitting conclusion to the horrible story here so imperfectly told.

Some time in May, 1865, while I was acting as clerk at General Thomas's head-quarters, a communication was received from Major-General J. H. Wilson, then in command of the cavalry forces of the Army of the Cumberland, inclosing the following letter :

“ANDERSONVILLE, GEORGIA, *May 7, 1865.*

“GENERAL :—It is with great reluctance that I address you these lines, being fully aware how little time is left you to attend to such matters as I now have the honor to lay before you, and if I could see any other way to accomplish my object, I would not intrude upon you. I am a native of Switzerland, and was, before the war, a citizen of Louisiana, and by profession a physician. Like hundreds and thousands of others, I was carried away by the maelstrom of excitement, and joined the southern army. I was very seriously wounded at the battle of Seven Pines, near Richmond, Virginia, and have nearly lost the use of my right arm. Unfit for field duty, I was ordered to report to Brevet Major-General John H. Winder, in charge of Federal prisoners of war, who ordered me to take charge of a prison in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. My health failing me, I applied for a furlough, and went to Europe, from whence I returned in February, 1864. I was then ordered to report to the commandant of the military prison at Andersonville, Georgia, who assigned me to the command of the interior of the prison. The duties I had to perform were arduous and unpleasant, and I am satisfied that no man can or will justly blame me for things that happened here, and which were beyond my power to control. I do not think that I ought to be held responsible for the shortness of the rations, for the overcrowded state of the prison (which was, of itself, a prolific source of fearful mortality), for the inadequate supplies of clothing, want of shelter, etc. Still, I now bear the odium—and men who were prisoners have seemed disposed to wreak their vengeance upon me for what they have suffered—I,

who was only the medium, or, I may better say, the tool, in the hands of my superiors. This is my condition. I am a man with a family. I lost all my property when the Federal army besieged Vicksburg. I have no money at present to go to any place; and, even if I had, I know of no place where I can go. My life is in danger, and I most respectfully ask of you help and relief. If you will be so generous as to give me some sort of a safe conduct, or, what I should greatly prefer, a guard to protect myself and family against violence, I should be thankful to you; and you may rest assured that your protection will not be given to one who is unworthy of it. My intention is to return with my family to Europe, as soon as I can make the arrangements. In the meantime, I have the honor, General, to remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

“HY. WIRZ,

“*Captain C. S. A.*

“MAJOR-GENERAL J. H. WILSON, U. S. A.,

“*Commanding Macon, Georgia.*

Immediately on the receipt of these papers, I made a statement to General Whipple, chief of staff and A. A. G. to General Thomas, setting forth some of the facts embodied in my narrative. From this and other considerations brought to the attention of General Thomas, Captain Wirz was taken into custody and forwarded to Washington, to await an investigation of the charges made against him. The indictment presented against him charged him, 1. With conspiring to injure the health and destroy the lives of United States soldiers held as prisoners of war by the Confederate States; 2. Murder, in violation of the laws and customs of war.

The court-martial, which convened August 24th to try the accused upon these charges, was composed of Major-General Lew Wallace, president; Major-Generals Gresham, Mott and Lorenzo Thomas, Brigadier-Generals E. L. Bragg, Fessenden and Ballier, Brevet-Colonel Alcock, and Lieutenant-Colonel Stibbs. Colonel N. P. Chipman was appointed judge-advocate. The counsel for the prisoner

were Louis Schade and O. H. Baker. To the charges Captain Wirz pleaded not guilty.

The testimony brought out upon the trial disclosed the horrible condition of the stockade and the infamous conduct of the officers in command in all its atrocity. The robberies of the prisoners made under the eye of Wirz, with his consent and by his approval, were fully proved. The inhuman punishments inflicted for the infraction of arbitrary prison rules, by men who through sickness and starvation were wholly irresponsible, were fastened upon him. The remorseless beating of the helpless, the orders issued by him to shoot men who presumed to beg a morsel of food, the orders which placed men in stocks, in chain-gang, sick, dying, starving, in the broiling sun, without shade, shelter, food or water, were fixed upon him, not only by the testimony of prisoners who had suffered from his brutality, but by that of rebel soldiers who were guards of the prison pen acting under him, and by documentary evidence which was captured from the rebel war office. While his able counsel endeavored to show that Captain Wirz was acting under the orders of superior officers, which, as a soldier, he was compelled to obey, they were unable to obscure the fact that their client was guilty of most atrocious treatment of prisoners while acting under the extensive discretionary powers with which the commandant of so large a military station is necessarily invested. The malicious torturing, maiming and killing of the helpless men in his hands was most clearly proven against him. He was found guilty, and on the 6th of November was sentenced to be hanged, and was executed in the yard of the old Capitol prison at Washington on the following 10th, amid the execrations of many of the victims of his former cruelty, who had gathered upon the house-tops to witness the execution. His body was buried in the penitentiary yard by the side of the conspirators convicted of the murder of Lincoln.

The apologists for the rebel treatment of Union prisoners have attempted to show that the trial and execution of Wirz was an act of military despotism, and wholly

unwarranted by the laws of war; that whatever might be the barbarities exercised at Andersonville, they were brought about by the necessities of war, and are chargeable to the inability of the Confederate States to prevent them; that Captain Wirz was a subordinate officer placed in charge of a trust, and acting in every particular under military orders, for which he was in no manner responsible. Let us briefly consider how far he was responsible for the treatment of the prisoners in his hands.

He was responsible for the "overcrowded state of the prison," because he had the power to enlarge the limits at any time; he was responsible for the "want of shelter," because he had the control, by his own confession, of the prison interior, and he could have allowed the prisoners the privilege of providing themselves with the necessary materials for protection against the climate; he was responsible for the terrible punishments of the stocks and chain-gang, for Lieutenant Davis, who was in command during the illness of Captain Wirz, expressly prohibited those punishments; thus proving that there were no orders from Richmond, or from any "superior officer," for inflicting them.

It is well known that orders given by a superior officer to his subordinate are general in their nature; and especially are they such, when they are given to one having command of an important post, like that at Andersonville, while great discretionary powers are allowed to carry out a general plan.

There is no doubt that there was a general plan on the part of the Confederate government to murder the Federal prisoners, and that Captain Wirz was selected as a fit and willing instrument, in furtherance of it; but the details of the torture were all his own. No order was ever given him to load men with balls and chains, and keep them wearing them for four or five weeks. no order was given him to place a sick man in the chain-gang and retain him there till he died; no order was given him to shoot defenseless sick men, or to murder those whom his



brutality had rendered insane and irresponsible; but he did all these things.

There seems to be a feeling, among a certain class of philanthropists, that the United States government had no right to punish this man for his crimes; and a great cry of horror went out against his trial. Men said he was acting under orders; but they forget that, even if that were true, the fact does not protect him. No man has a right to do any thing unlawful, even though he is ordered by his superior to do so. Men argue in favor of Wirz as if he were a subordinate of a foreign power, and irresponsible to any government except his own; but, even in that view, would it be consonant with the dignity and self respect of the United States, to make peace with a foreign power whose subordinates had treated its prisoners of war with such barbarity, without making a demand that the criminals be surrendered for punishment, or that suitable punishment be inflicted upon them by the home authorities? And is it to be supposed that peace would ever be made between the contending parties until such demand was fully complied with? If such a course is just and right between two sovereign states, it was certainly just and right to adopt it between the government and its rebellious subjects.

It is a false philanthropy to consider rebels as any thing but rebels: no government ever succeeded in asserting its power in any other way. It may have been policy to pardon them; if so, they should be treated as pardoned men, whose immunity from punishment for the future depends upon their own conduct. But there are crimes which do not deserve pardon, and if the deliberate starvation of thousands of helpless men is not one of these, then should all punitive laws be abolished, and society resolved into its original elements, owning no law but that which endows every individual with the right to use any means necessary for self-preservation.

The whole nation, the civilized world, right, justice, and humanity, demand the punishment of the perpetrators of these astounding crimes; that men may know that even

war, with all its necessary horrors, does not permit them to indulge their gust for blood unrestrained ; that it is not a cloak with which they can cover fiendish atrocities, and that its sanction will not protect them in the practice of private vengeance, or in the gratification of their lust for the sight of misery. Whoever the criminals may have been, whether Captain Wirz, the instrument, or Davis and his cabinet, the originators, each and all should have been made to undergo an extreme penalty for their great guilt.

From the homes made desolate by their hands ; from the deserted firesides, whose ashes have long been cold ; from mothers, wives, and kindred, whose loved ones come no more to greet them ; from every hamlet and crowded town throughout the land ; from the bloody graves of thirteen thousand victims, cut down in the pride of manhood, and wasted by famine and torture, such as civilized warfare never permitted before, there comes a cry for retribution ; and the voices of those murdered men, pleading for justice, will haunt these homicides, carrying their appeal from an earthly tribunal to that higher court where a merciful, but an avenging judge shall set the seal of right at last.

A GENERAL ACCOUNT  
OF  
PRISON LIFE AND PRISONS IN THE SOUTH  
DURING THE  
WAR OF THE REBELLION  
INCLUDING  
STATISTICAL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO PRISONERS OF WAR



BY

HENRY B. FURNESS

LATE SERGEANT CO. "B," TWENTY-FOURTH WISCONSIN INFANTRY, SHERIDAN'S  
DIVISION, ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND










BELLE ISLE.

## PRISON LIFE AND PRISONS IN THE SOUTH.



THE preceding narratives, prepared as the personal experiences of the authors, contain statements so much at variance with the prevailing treatment of prisoners of war, as to challenge credibility. The startling disclosures which they make, seem rather the morbid imaginings of men who have become insane under the rule of a vindictive passion, than the recital of actual occurrences. The barbarities which characterized the wars of ancient times are regarded as the outcome of unbridled passion wielded by unbridled power. The modern reader shudders at the inhuman practices of the Roman conquerors, and blesses the benign spirit which has banished the savage war-cry of *vae victis*. The progress of the race in science and general knowledge has mitigated the unavoidable horrors of war, and introduced a spirit of kindness and mercy into the terrible necessities of battle. The sword that flashes before the armed foeman is sheathed when resistance ceases. A compassionate hand is outstretched to the sick, the wounded, and the helpless; no effort is spared to soften the rigors of captivity, or alleviate the inevitable suffering incident to the barbarities of war. While contending armies in active conflict are required to kill with pitiless fury, they are also enjoined by the christianized spirit of the age, to furnish to the captive such necessities of food, clothing, shelter, and protection, as are compatible with his safe-keeping, and security to themselves.

Therefore it is, that when we turn to accounts of the

experiences of Federal prisoners in the hands of their enemies, we look to find the practice of those modern principles which govern the intercourse of nations, and turn away incredulous from statements which arraign them. Herein we find ourselves unable to give credence to tales of horror, of starvation, of murder, exposure, criminal neglect of the sick and wounded, and of robbery, inflicted by a people who arrogated to themselves the title of chivalrous humanity, upon enemies whom the fortune of war had placed in their hands.

It seems proper, therefore, as well as just to the narrators of the foregoing accounts, to supplement their statements by evidence, if there be any, which shall corroborate them and prove the pictures not overdrawn. Unfortunately for the humanity of the Confederate authorities, the materials are abundant and accessible. They consist of the sworn statements of the prisoners themselves, the captured rebel archives, the reports of the Confederate surgeons to the higher officers of the Confederate government, and the reports and comments of those officers indorsed upon such reports. Beside these, a fruitful source of information has been found in the report on the treatment of prisoners of war by the rebel authorities made to the House of Representatives of the Fortieth Congress, and known as Shank's Report.

It is well, at this distance from a war which is unprecedented in the annals of modern conflicts for the bitterness of the strife, not only among the leaders themselves, but shared as well by the private citizen and the private soldier, to pause before lifting the veil. Peace has spread its kindly wings over the combatants, and strife among her brooded children should be hushed. And yet not hushed. The truth of history demands that the claims of a fictitious system of civilization should be exposed to the execration of mankind, and held up as a warning to those who seek to found a nation upon any other than the broadest principles of humanity, which embrace alike the noblest and the humblest. Wherever in the world's prog-



ress the ways become dangerous, the beacon light should be hung out to warn the unwary or ignorant traveler.

It is, moreover, justice to the survivors of these indescribable sufferings that their contemporaries, as well as future generations, should know the price which has been paid to perpetuate the Federal Union. The deeds of daring upon the field, amid the excitement and frenzy of the fight, are preserved in imperishable song, in marble and bronze. It is fitting also that the quiet courage, the manly endurance, the unflinching fidelity, of the unfortunate captives should, so far as honest effort, however humble, may effect, be instilled into the minds of the young—a lesson of fortitude and of heroic devotion to principle which sacrificed health and life in the defense of country and human freedom.

Long before the opening of hostilities in the late-rebellion, there had been cultivated a feeling of hatred toward the people of the North by public speakers, by the public press, and by the pulpit of the South. To be a Yankee was to be an outcast. The inhabitants of the free states were considered by the ignorant white population of the South to be on a level with the slaves of their own wealthy classes. Their frugal habits, industry, general information and intelligence were regarded as impertinent by the educated, and as insults by the ignorant. To live in luxurious ease was the abiding ambition on the one hand, regardless of the means by which that ease was obtained; to be active, energetic, industrious, was the grand incentive on the other. The traffic in human flesh as a source of wealth, however horrible to the contemplation of the humane philosopher, was even to the highest intellects of the South no more obnoxious than the traffic in brutes. They were familiar with all the cruelties of the slave system, and, reared from childhood in the midst of its atrocities, their better instincts became seared, and they looked upon the suffering anguish of the laborer—because he was a laborer—with the calmness of the savage upon the torments of his writhing victim. Gray-haired philosophers and gentle women

alike recognized the necessities incident to the system, and shut their eyes and closed their hearts to its miseries.

To them the Federal army was an organized band of laborers — barbarous, inhuman and ignorant. They believed them to be cowards as well, and disposed, as all cowards are, to excesses in war. They denominated them “plundering hordes,” “vandals,” “hirelings.” They accorded to them none of the urbanities or humanities of civilized men. They accused them of enlisting in the army in order to secure support in idleness, to win their bread by exposing themselves as little as possible to the dangers of war—at the same time, by rapine and petty thievery, to enrich themselves at the expense of their wealthy enemies.

From the very beginning of the struggle, we find them disposed to wreak their private vengeance upon their invaders. In support of these statements is the letter of one James Phelan, a resident of Aberdeen, Miss., to President Davis, in which he gravely asserts: “Treated as our prisoners now are, captivity has neither sacrifice nor suffering to a large proportion of them. They are as well or better fed and cared for than if they were in their own ranks, or even in their own homes. I am prepared to believe that the greater portion of the army of our enemy are men who fare better as soldiers than as citizens, and who enter the ranks for that reason. If so, the increasing distress and starvation of the lower classes of the Northern population will continue to swell their ranks, unless some counter policy on our part can evade its influence. Under our present policy, such men have every thing to gain and nothing to lose. If they enlist against us, and defeat us, *it is well*. If taken captive by us, *well also*. In either event, they escape privation and want, and obtain comfort and abundance, either in our *parlors* or our *prisons*.” He then outlines a policy of treatment, recommending that all prisoners taken by the Confederate armies should be collected at some point accessible to the United States, their government notified of their condition, and asked to feed and clothe them. If it refused, then to

let them starve. This treatment, in his opinion, would tend to discourage recruiting.\* This letter bears date, August 28, 1861.

Another citizen, W. A. Wilson, under date of Port Sullivan, September 2, 1861, recommended that prisoners of war be set to work upon the construction of a much-needed railway for military, mail, and other purposes, connecting his state with Louisiana. He closes his recommendation by the energetic remark: "They might as well work, as they have to be fed." †

A Mr. Tazewell W. Price, of Cotton Plant, Arkansas, recommended in a letter to Hon. L. P. Walker, Secretary of War, that the prisoners be handcuffed, sent to Fort Sumter, and there placed on bread and water; and that Generals Pillow, Hardee, and McCulloch be instructed to break the left leg of all of them, and turn them loose.‡

Finally, Mr. D. G. McRea recommends to President Davis to treat all foreigners serving in the Federal armies as interlopers, and not as legitimate prisoners of war. His letter bears date, November 16, 1861.||

These letters, quixotic as their recommendations may be, coming from widely separated parts of the Confederacy, show a remarkable ignorance of the character of the men who composed the rank and file of the patriot army. It is not to be supposed that the authorities at Richmond seriously considered these recommendations, but subsequent events most clearly showed that, had they been acted upon, a certain class of rebel sentiment throughout the country would have uttered no protest.

The early history of the conflict reveals no settled policy on the part of the insurgents with respect to prisoners of war. There were many instances of mistreatment, it is true, resulting from the lack of preparation to receive and care for military captives and ignorance of duty toward them. The war had been precipitated by their own action, yet their preparations were in no state of for-

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\* House Reports, pp. 382, 383.

† Id., 383.

‡ Id., p. 383.

|| Id., p. 383.



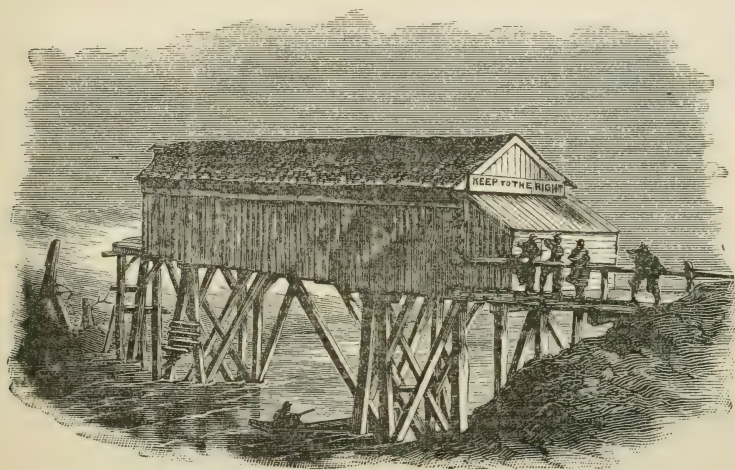
wardness, either for victory or defeat. A large portion of the intelligent South believed, or affected to believe, that there would be no war, because the North would not fight. In the opening scenes, the insurgent forces were in the main victorious. Their passions had not been roused by defeat; they believed the eye of Europe to be upon them, and the first year of the struggle was spent in masquerading before the face of foreign powers, in the hope of recognition. Their military successes softened the asperity of the contest, and it became them to behave well beneath the watchful eye of England and France.

As the war progressed, the North perfected the discipline of her armies, and at length the tide of victory set toward the side of the enemies of southern independence; the possibility of final defeat began to present itself to the rebel mind. They found themselves hemmed in upon the side of the sea, and upon the frontiers of the seceding states. On the land side the lines were drawing closer. King Cotton, whose subjects they claimed to be, and to whose rescue they had believed all England would hasten, had calmly transferred his seat of empire to the east. The spinners and weavers of Manchester and Birmingham, so confidently relied upon as allies, did not force their queen into a war to procure the coveted staple. All hope had fled of securing assistance from abroad.

Among the earliest instances of an apparently settled policy to render their prisoners of war unfit for service in the field, but still to retain them as subjects for exchange, is the treatment of a detachment taken at Chickasaw Bayou, during the operations about Vicksburg, late in the year 1862. They were taken to the latter city—the officers quartered in the jail, the privates, without shelter, in the jail yard. Fourteen officers were confined in a room ten feet wide by twelve in length. Here they remained for two months. The rations were of unsifted corn-meal and boiled beef, entirely inadequate in quantity and in quality to support a healthy existence. The weather was cold. From this place they were taken to the remains of a bridge across the Pearl, near Jackson,



Mississippi, it having been closed in for the purpose. Officers and private soldiers, to the number of more than two hundred, were here immured without either light or fuel. The flooring of the bridge was loosely laid, and through the open seams the rushing water could be seen. These cracks afforded them the only light they had. No straw or other bedding was furnished for some time. At last, a single bale of the strippings from corn-stalks was given them, and these in quantity too limited to supply



PEARL RIVER BRIDGE.

the needs of the incarcerated men. Some of them died under the treatment, and their surviving comrades were compelled to stumble over their bodies in the darkness of their prison. In this prison the food was mush, made of corn-meal.\*

From this time forward, if, indeed, the policy was not initiated some months earlier, it seems to have become the settled plan of the rebel leaders, not openly announced, but none the less vigorously pushed, to deplete the armies of the North by capturing its soldiers, and rendering them unfit for further military service. This

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\* Testimony of Gov. Thos. C. Fletcher, H. R., 4064.

was to be accomplished by natural agencies. These were—exposure to the vicissitudes of the weather, short and impure rations, deprivation of medical attendance, crowding into the closest possible quarters, lack of means for securing cleanliness, and insufficient clothing.

A charge so serious as this is not to be made without convincing proof of its verity. It becomes necessary, therefore, to examine carefully the testimony which has come to light through the statements of the sufferers themselves, through the captured papers, documents, and reports of the rebel war department, and the reports of surgeons and citizens cognizant of the condition of the prisoners during their confinement, and after their exchange.

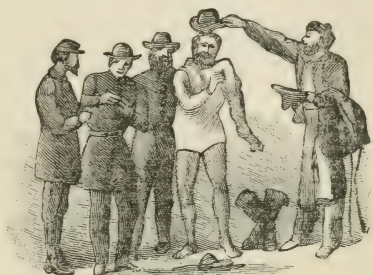
This testimony will be presented under the following divisions: 1. Treatment at time of capture, and during transportation. 2. Treatment on arrival at prison station. 3. Location and description of prisons. 4. Food, water, and fuel in prison quarters. 5. Knowledge of the condition of the prisoners, possessed or obtainable, by the controlling authorities. 6. Power to relieve the sufferings. 7. Agents employed to guard and provide for the prisoners. 8. The results of the policy.

## I.

### TREATMENT AT TIME OF CAPTURE.

From the latter part of the year 1862, but more particularly after the repeated violations of the cartel of July 22d of that year, by the rebel agent, the Hon. Robert Ould, in declaring paroled Confederate prisoners to be exchanged, especially those of the army of General Pemberton, which was captured and paroled at Vicksburg, July 4, 1863, exchanges between the two belligerents practically ceased. Prisoners consequently accumulated in the hands of both parties. The strict blockade of the coast, and the careless habits of the Confederate soldier, frequently re-

duced him to straits in the matter of clothing, blankets, and money; and the example set by the officers having charge of prisons,\* speedily induced the common soldier to avail himself of every opportunity to despoil the unlucky foeman who, by the fortune of battle, fell into his power. In this manner, he appropriated blankets, overcoats, haversacks, and caps—all of them private property, and essential to the comfort and health of the prisoner, if not to his life.† Growing bolder, as he found himself unpunished, he finally made a systematic search of his captive, and plundered his hat, shoes or boots, handkerchiefs, finger-rings, and money, not even sparing pocket photographs of his family friends.‡



Thus destitute, the luckless prisoner was forced to march, barefoot, hatless, unprotected from the weather, whether in summer or winter, for many miles, to some distant station. His guard was usually cavalry, and when the march was long, the guard was relieved by fresh men. The speed of the prisoner, however, was not slackened, and he was compelled to keep pace with his escort at the point of the saber or the muzzle of the carbine.|| Those who fell out by the way from weakness, being incapable of surviving the hardships in store for them, were sometimes tied to the saddle and assisted to keep up;§ and cases were not unknown, where the disabled captive was left behind the line of march with a guard, who afterward rejoined the escort, without him.¶ Instances are on record of disabled men killed by a thrust of the bayonet, rolled out of the path, and left.\*\*

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\* See the evidence of robbing prisoners at Richmond, by Turner and others. H. R., *passim*.

† See Testimony, H. R., *passim*.

|| Burch Statement, H. R., 1051.

¶ Holmes Account, H. R., 1111.

‡ Id.

§ Id.

\*\* Reed, H. R., 1080.



During these rapid and exhausting marches, the prisoners were often kept without food for two to four days, deprived of water, and compelled to sleep without the usual cover of the soldier, upon the bare ground, in open fields, without fires.\* Sometimes the ration was issued raw, and fire was allowed with which to cook it; but, having been deprived of cooking utensils, he was compelled to bake his bread ration upon a board or a chip, or in the ashes of his fire.

Unless his place of capture was near the prison in which he was to be incarcerated, his march usually ended at some railway station, where he was placed upon a train for more rapid transportation. For this purpose, he was crowded into box-cars, with sixty to seventy comrades, and shut in. In this closely-pent van, he was forced to remain from twenty-four to thirty-six hours, without food or water, or the means to relieve natural necessities. Packed so closely, he had no opportunity of sitting, without danger of being trodden upon by his comrades—most of whom were compelled to stand—in the sudden lurching of the moving train.† Not infrequently, the cars had been used upon the up-trip for transporting cattle. It was not deemed necessary to cleanse them for the reception of Yankee prisoners. The end of the journey reached, the luckless captive, besmirched with filth, was presented at the prison gate, in some sort prepared to anticipate the fate in store for him.

## II.

### TREATMENT ON ARRIVING AT PRISON.

So universal was the custom of searching the prisoners for valuables at the prison doors that a general reference to the statements given in Shank's report will be sufficient for the account under this head. No special references will therefore be given.

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\* H. R. Testimony, *passim*.

† Various Accounts, H. R.



According to the rules of war, it is lawful to deprive a military prisoner of any means of making his escape, as well as of such instrumentalities as will enable him to put his guard to unusual vigilance in retaining him in captivity. At the same time, it is conceded to be the right and the duty of a prisoner of war to secure his return to liberty if he can; and for that purpose to resort to chicanery or force if necessary. No objection can, therefore, be urged against the practice of demanding of captives the surrender of any moneys, watches, or other valuables, by the use of which he could be able to corrupt his guard and obtain his liberty. This practice had the sanction of both governments during the late war, and has been in vogue among other nations as well. The United States officers, on depriving their captives of their money at the prisons in which they were immured, made a careful list of the funds and valuables taken, issuing a receipt for the same. This receipt was worth its face value with the authorized sutler of the prison, and might be drawn against for such articles not contraband of war as the prisoner desired. The balance, if there were one in his favor, was returned to the prisoner on his release. On the other hand, the Confederate authorities confiscated the private property of the Federal prisoner, giving no receipt for it, and in no instance upon record returning him any portion of it. He was robbed as completely as if he had passed through the hands of a highwayman.

Despite the vigilance of his captor, who, in his haste, was debarred the opportunity of an exhaustive search, the shrewd Yankee prisoner was sometimes able to secrete his money so as to conceal it from the eye of the rebel soldier upon the field. But longer experience and ampler leisure combined to make the lynx-eyed jailer more expert in prosecuting the search. The stale promise of return upon release was always proffered at the Richmond prisons, on condition that the prisoner voluntarily surrendered his funds. But this promise usually availed little, and the victim was compelled to denude himself, when his clothing was thoroughly and carefully examined,

the linings being ripped off and the seams scrutinized. Even their persons were explored in the avaricious search. This ceremony being completed, he was suffered to resume his tattered apparel. Despite the rigid examination to which he was thus subjected, he sometimes succeeded in secreting some portion of his money, which afterward stood him in good stead.

It will be remembered that while still in the field his captor deprived the prisoner of his outer clothing. No instance is recorded of a further confiscation of clothing after his arrival at prison quarters. An attempt to do so would have been useless. Nothing remained to him but rags, and, besides, worn clothing could be of no service to his keepers, who, it appears, were the only ones who profited by the spoliation. But it is well authenticated that, in many instances, pocket-knives, combs, even tobacco, were taken from them, more in the spirit of petty thievery than for any service such things might be to the commander of the prison quarters.

Thus, from the beginning of his captivity, the Federal prisoner of war was made to feel that he had to expect no mercy from his captors. Even his search was accompanied by the most ribald treatment and not infrequently by brutal violence. The testimony shows many instances of sick and disabled prisoners who were unable to obey the order to disrobe, being cut with sabers and threatened with death; and their comrades in misery, to save them from beating with clubs and kicking and pounding by the guards, helped them to remove their apparel, to be searched.

While this was the general treatment of the men at Richmond, similar and even more barbarous usage awaited them at other points to which they were removed. At Danville, at Andersonville, Salisbury, Florence, indeed, at every prison to which they were assigned, they were compelled to submit to these gross indignities. There was one exception. The men who capitulated at Plymouth, North Carolina, stipulated for the retention of their private property, and, phenomenal as it may appear to those ac-

quainted with the *mala fides* of the rebels, they were undisturbed in their possession. Even the officers at Andersonville respected the terms of surrender. It mattered little. They soon voluntarily disposed of their clothing in return for food to stay the ceaseless gnawing of hunger.

### III.

#### LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION OF PRISONS.

The prisons used for the confinement of captives by the rebel government, were located in various parts of the Confederacy, and numbered sixty-eight, counting all of those at Richmond, Va., as one. Many of these were of minor importance, containing but few prisoners, and these for but a short time, and are regarded as *transient* prisons in the reports of the United States War Department. The most prominent were located at Richmond and Danville, Virginia; Salisbury, North Carolina; Charleston, Columbia, and Florence, South Carolina; Andersonville, Macon, Millen, and Savannah, Georgia; Cahawba, and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Camp Ford, Texas. Those in the vicinity of Richmond were, Belle Isle, the Smith, Pemberton, Libby, Laundry, and Castle Thunder. At Danville were six, known and designated by numbers; at the other localities the several prisons were within the same inclosure, and under the direct personal supervision of the same officer.

In Shank's report, above referred to, the places for confinement are arranged in two classes: First, buildings used as temporary places of imprisonment. Second, stockades and inclosures in the nature of camps. In the temporary prisons the men were sometimes confined for a few days only; sometimes for several weeks; and, as in the case of Danville, for several months. The buildings were generally abandoned tobacco warehouses, constructed of wood or brick, and three or four stories in height. Those

at Richmond were built upon the street, and afforded the prisoners no opportunity for exercise or a change of air.

During the year 1861, the Richmond prisons were under the command of Brigadier (afterward Major) General John H. Winder. Major T. P. Turner was the commander during 1862-3-4. Belle Isle was latterly under command of Lieutenant V. Boissieux. Captain and Acting Adjutant-General Henry Wirz was connected with the Richmond prisons in a subordinate capacity during a part of the years 1862-3.



GENERAL J. H. WINDER.

The prison buildings at Richmond were large, roomy, and airy, and had it not been for their overcrowded condition would have been as comfortable, in respect to shelter and protection from the weather, as military prisoners could require. The Pemberton was three stories high, and ninety by one hundred feet in area. It had been a tobacco warehouse, and was fitted with no conveniences for the accommodation of the prisoners. No beds or bunks of any kind were furnished, nor were there any opportunities for sitting, except by squatting upon the haunches, and this at the imminent risk of being overset and trampled upon in the overcrowded room.



The ventilation of the rooms was by means of windows from which the glass had been removed, perhaps, by the prisoners themselves. In the lower rooms the windows were barred with iron, or planked. These were effective means to secure abundant introduction of pure air, but they served as well for the access of the biting frosts of the winter.

In the Smith prison, adjacent to Pemberton, like conditions prevailed. The account of this place, given in Davidson's narrative, is fully in accord with the facts as developed by the testimony of the various persons confined there.

Libby prison was located on the south-east corner of Carey and Eighteenth streets, in that part of Richmond known as the "Rocketts." In its rear was the James River canal, near the river. It was one hundred and thirty feet in length, and one hundred and five feet in width, and was three stories in height in front, and four in the rear. It was substantially built of brick, and previous to the war had been used as a tobacco warehouse, and a depot for goods in the ship chandlery line. The building was divided laterally, by brick partitions, into three distinct apartments, which, upon the second and third floors, were one hundred feet in length and forty-five feet in width. In the third story there were ten windows to each apartment, five in front and five in the rear; upon the second story there were, in front, four windows, and a door used by the proprietors for hoisting goods. A portion of the lower floor was cut up into small rooms for various purposes. The lower west room was further subdivided into offices; the middle room was furnished with cook-stoves, and used for a kitchen. In one corner of the kitchen a room had been constructed which was used as a dungeon for prisoners who had been guilty of infraction of the prison rules. In this cell the captives taken from Kilpatrick's "raiders" were confined. The lower east room was the prison hospital. In the basement were the dungeons in which the recaptured men were confined. These dungeons, or cells, were entirely unfurnished, without

fires, with iron gratings for windows, and infested with rats, which the prisoners confined there sometimes caught and procured to be cooked by their negro attendant. They were pervaded by a loathsome and damp atmosphere; being rarely cleansed, their floors were covered with filth, and every crevice of the walls and floor was swarming with vermin. Prisoners confined in these dungeons were heavily ironed. In one of these noisome cells the gallant Colonel A. D. Streight was confined for twenty-one days.

The apartments allotted to the prisoners were reached by open stairways, that leading from first to the second floor being temporary, and taken away at night. The rooms were entirely unfurnished with conveniences for sitting, sleeping, or eating. Water was supplied from the city water-works, and was both abundant and wholesome. No wash-basin was provided, and a tank or box was placed under the faucet to catch the drippings when the water was drawn. The sinks were extremely limited in number, and were in the open room. In these apartments as many as eleven hundred men were confined at one time. Toward the close of the war, the Libby Prison was used as a receiving station for officers on their way to places of permanent confinement in the far south, the beleagured city being deemed insecure.

#### BELLE ISLE.\*

This prison was situated upon an island in the James river, just above the long bridge that connects the north and south banks of the stream. The island contained an area variously estimated, the highest being one hundred acres. The upper portion was a high and rolling bluff, covered with trees and sward, while the lower part was little elevated above the waters of the river, and in high water was flooded to the depth of some inches.† This

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\* See p. 401.

† H. R., 961.

part of the island was sandy and barren, without a tree for shelter against the heat of the summer sun, or to break the force of the bleak winds of winter that sweep down the river from the mountains to the north-westward. No verdant spot here greets the eye, or softens the strong glare of the fervid sunlight; on every hand is the glistening, barren sand.

Around this low and desolate portion of the island were thrown up earth-works some three feet in height, with a ditch on either side, inclosing an area of some ten acres. Leading from the camp to the river was a lane, made by rows of boards some twelve feet high. A heavy gate closed this lane at night, and shut off all access to the river. The ditch upon the inside marked the dead line, to overpass or touch which was death at the hands of the guard. Some of the prisoners aver that they were not allowed to go within three feet of the dead line, and that, as the guards were the only judges of that distance, men were sometimes shot who were actually within the limits assigned them.

The provisions made for the comfort of the prisoners were extremely limited. Although a prison camp almost from the beginning of the war, chosen on account of its isolated situation and the ease with which it could be guarded by a small detachment of men, no permanent arrangement was ever made for the shelter of the prisoners, or for their needful accommodation. No barracks were erected, but in their place tents of various patterns and sizes were at first provided. As the numbers of the prisoners increased, even these were not furnished; and, during the winter of 1863-4, some four thousand men were compelled to lie shelterless upon the frozen sand.\* The inevitable crowding of the tents that would follow from this inadequacy of accommodation, requires no mention.

The tents were provided with no straw. The blankets and overcoats of the prisoners had, to a very large extent,

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\* H. R., 804.

been taken from them before they were placed in the camp. The floor, upon which they were compelled to lie, was the sandy soil of the island. Those who were outside the tents were in much worse condition. They passed the winter of 1863-4 in this manner. The river was covered with a thin crust of ice, and the camp with snow during a part of that time. Need it be said, that many of these half-naked wretches froze to death, or that large numbers lost fingers, ears, and feet from the frost?

Although the James river surrounded the camp at Belle Isle upon three sides, the facilities for obtaining water were meager. The passage to the stream was through the lane above mentioned. The water front at the end of this lane was about twenty feet. Here were located the sinks used by the prisoners during the day, all access being cut off by the closing of the gate at night. The close proximity of the sinks to the place reserved for getting the water, made the latter oftentimes impure and unfit for use. The enterprise of the men soon overcame this difficulty, by sinking wells within the inclosure. These furnished a pure water at a depth of three feet. Steps were cut in the sides of the well, by which they descended to dip up the water in their cups, half canteens, and boot-legs. These wells, however, were not serviceable for a long time. The sick men, being confined within the limits of the camp during the entire night, soon impregnated the sand with offal, which, as matter of course, vitiated the water with seepage.

Bathing was allowed, under guard, in the water of the river. A limited number was permitted to go at a time to wash their persons and their remnants of clothing; but, there being no organization among them, the stronger often hurried in front of their sick and feebler comrades, and these were thus deprived of the privilege. Upon this island, ten to twelve thousand men were confined at one time.



## DANVILLE, VIRGINIA.

Of the prisons at this place, but little need be said here. The account furnished in the preceding narrative is accurate, and is fully sustained by the statements of the prisoners who were confined there. The city of Danville is situated on the south bank of the river Dan, from which it derives its name, and, before the war, was a thriving town, deriving its importance from its extensive manufacture of tobacco. The prisons were abandoned tobacco warehouses, usually three stories in height, and known by numbers. No. 3 was used for the confinement of officers; the remaining numbers for enlisted men, both white and colored.

The arrangements for the comfort and conveniences of the prisons at Danville were similar to those in Richmond and Belle Isle. As usual in other buildings, the prisoners were confined upon the second and third floors, and the windows constituted the "dead lines." Upon what theory the prisoners were not permitted to approach these windows to look abroad over the city or the surrounding country, has not been explained. It may be that the authorities feared the venality of the guards—a useless fear after so many precautions had been taken to deprive the captives of all means of bribing them; perhaps because it was apprehended that their famished and forlorn appearance might awaken sympathy for their miserable condition—another useless apprehension, for the almost universal testimony relating to this period of the war shows not only no commiseration of their state by the inhabitants around them, but, on the other hand, an almost fiendish pleasure at sight of the distressing spectacle. Whatever may have been the reason, it was the general order in all the prisons to shoot any and all who approached near the dead line, whether it were a window forty feet from the ground or a ditch drawn around the camp, or even an imaginary line defined by the untrained eye of the sentinel who stood guard.

The water supply was obtained from the Dan river, and was brought in by a detail of the prisoners. From the various accounts it appears that even this supply was very small in quantity. In one of the statements it is said that the allowance was about a pint a day to a man.\* In the yard of one of these prisons there had been a well from which the inmates of that building at first obtained sufficient water; but, for an unknown reason, the guards cut off this source by sawing the pump in two and securely covering the well. No water was given for washing, nor were the prisoners permitted to repair to the river for that purpose.

The Danville prisons were under the command of various officers at different times. One Major Mason Morfit had command during the winter of 1863-4. He was succeeded by Colonel R. C. Smith. Previous to Major Morfit's appointment the station was under the command of Captain Henry McCoy. The general command was vested in General John H. Winder. None of the prisoners, except such as were detailed to carry water or rations, were permitted to go out of the building for exercise. Small means were provided for warming the prisons, and during the unprecedented cold of the winter of 1863-4 the captives were entirely without fire or fuel. Their rations were issued cooked. There is no report of the aggregate number of prisoners confined in Danville.

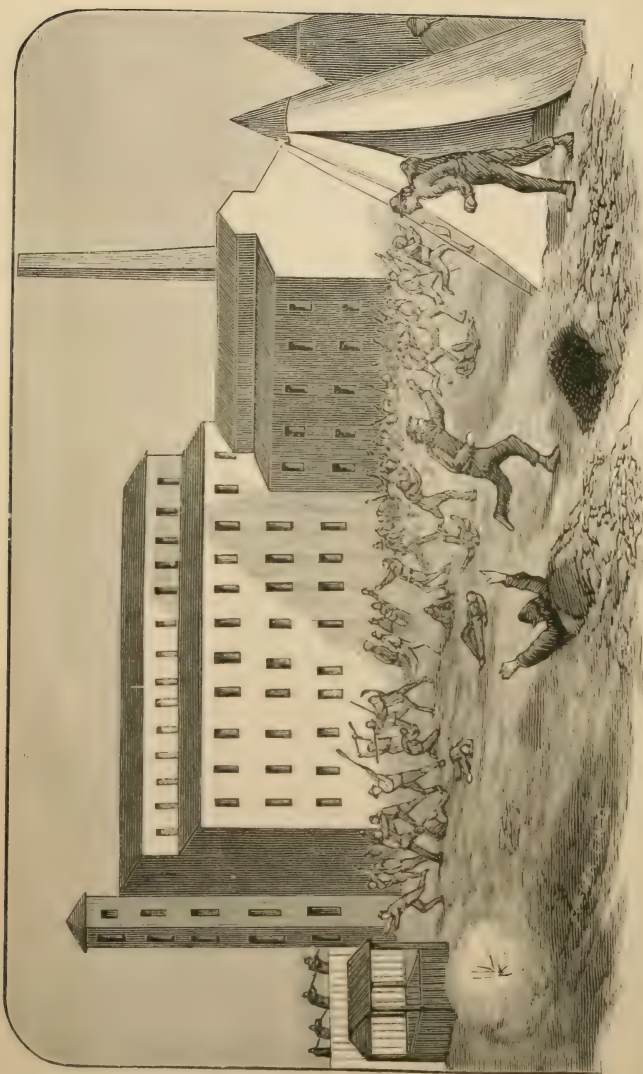
### SALISBURY.

The town of Salisbury is located at the junction of the two branches of the North Carolina Railroad, in Rowan county, North Carolina. The prison was a four-story brick factory, forty by one hundred feet, together with five smaller buildings used as boarding houses for the factory. A board fence surrounding these buildings inclosed an area of some eleven acres. The soil is a stiff,

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\* H. R., 845.





ATTEMPTED ESCAPE, SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA.



tenacious red clay, and without artificial drainage it holds water for a long time; after rain or snow it becomes a vast slough of mud. The customary dead line was located about ten feet from the fence.

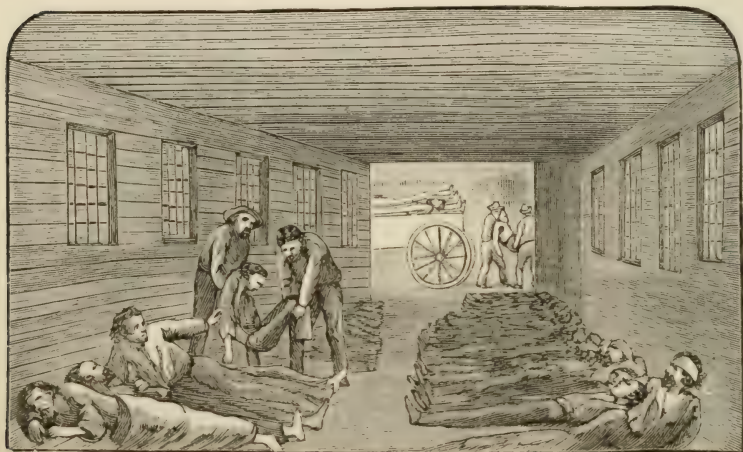
Water was obtained from nine wells within the inclosure, and from the creek, half a mile distant, to which the prisoners were allowed to go, a certain number at a time, under guard, with buckets and barrels. The supply obtained from all these sources, however, was not more than sufficient for cooking and drinking purposes. The lack of a running stream for washing and bathing was the prolific source of untold misery to the unfortunate occupants. The camp lacked drainage; the sinks were a source of pestilential and malarial influences.

Three hundred tents and flies, of mixed sizes and patterns, were issued for the use of the prisoners in October by Major Mason Morfit, formerly at Danville, now prison quartermaster at Salisbury. They constituted the only shelter for the prisoners, who numbered eight thousand seven hundred and forty on the 7th of November, 1864, near ten thousand in December of that year, and diminishing to five thousand and seventy on the 18th of February, 1865. An extension barracks was begun by Major Morfit, capable of sheltering the entire number, but it was abandoned by order of General Winder. The prisoners themselves furnished their own shelter. Some by digging beneath the buildings, and excavating a sufficient space for the joint occupancy of a squad; others burrowing holes in the ground. These were constructed by excavating an entrance about two feet square, to the depth of five feet, and then tunneling at right angles, thus forming a room about the size and shape of a brick oven. At one end a fire-place was constructed. There they slept at night, and remained the greater part of the day.\* Others dug trenches, and covered them with pieces of shelter tents or boughs, spreading clay over the top. In these pits they were protected against excessive cold, but the rains some-

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\* H. R., 794.

times flooded them out. Many had no shelter, they possessing neither the implements nor the energy, in their weakened condition, to provide themselves. Such were compelled to lie in groups upon the ground at night, and to huddle together during the day. The weather was cold, the ground frozen, and snow fell at times to the depth of several inches, and remained upon the ground for two or three days. Some of the men were frozen to death; some lost their feet, others their ears or fingers. They were all clothed in light summer apparel, well worn and



HOSPITAL INTERIOR, SALISBURY, N. C.

thin; their blankets, hats, and shoes, in many instances, had been taken from them at the front at time of capture or upon their admission to the camp. No new clothing was issued to them, and they instituted, from sheer necessity, the habit of robbing the dead of such of their rags as could be conveniently taken, and appeared serviceable, and, by patching them together, were able partially to cover themselves.

In the report of Inspector T. W. Hall, A. A. and Q. G., dated February 17, 1865, it is stated that at about that date three thousand blankets and one thousand pairs of

pants had been received from the United States government, and were then being distributed under the supervision of Federal officers sent from Danville for that purpose. By an order of Brigadier-General Bradley T. Johnson, post commandant, which was rigidly enforced, the supplies were all distributed to those for whom they were designed. And by the same order speculation upon the necessities of the prisoners was strictly prohibited.

There were no police regulations for the government of the camp, or for regulating the discipline of the prisoners among themselves. The strong overpowered the weak, and in the misery into which all were plunged many deeds of robbery were committed by men whose malignant passions were excited by the desperate circumstances surrounding them. In the report above referred to, Major Gee, the prison commander, is censured for not providing the prisoners with "wooden scrapers and hickory brooms, with wheel-barrows or boxes with rope handles," to remove the accumulated filth of the camp.

#### FLORENCE.

This prison, which was in command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. Iverson, was located at Florence, Darlington county, South Carolina, at the junction of the Checraw and Darlington with the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad, about one hundred miles due north of Charleston. The prison was a stockade constructed of logs set upright in the ground, from three to four feet deep, surrounded by a ditch about five feet deep and seven wide, the dirt from the excavation being thrown up against the stockade, making a walk for the sentinels about three feet from the top of the palisades. The stockade was fourteen hundred feet long, and seven hundred and twenty-five feet wide, comprising 23.3 acres; from this total acreage are to be deducted six, which were swamp and could not be used for camping the prisoners, leaving 17.3 acres available. It was situated about two

miles from the town. A large stream ran through the stockade, the upper part being used for bathing, washing, and drinking, while upon the lower part the sinks were located. The dead line was a furrow.

The prisoners here had no shelter, except such as they could provide for themselves. They resorted to the expedient of digging trenches in the ground, and covering them with boughs overlaid with mud. Some, who were better provided, made a frame-work of poles, over which they spread branches of trees, which they covered in with soil. Others lay exposed upon the bare ground.

November 25, 1864, the prison contained eleven thousand, four hundred and twenty-four prisoners. Lieutenants Barrett and Hays assisted the post commandant in the discharge of his duties as inspectors of the prison interior. The prisoners were divided into detachments of one thousand and companies of one hundred. They were counted once every day at 6 o'clock A. M. by eleven enlisted men detailed for that purpose. A sergeant selected from the prisoners for each hundred called the roll. The cooking of rations was performed by the prisoners themselves, and fuel was sometimes issued to enable them to do this. When the fuel fell short, they ate their rations raw.

#### CAHABA.

This prison was an inclosure of about sixteen thousand square feet, surrounded by a brick wall, from which extended a leaky roof, leaving about one thousand, six hundred feet of open space in the center of the yard. Here, in the early part of 1864, were confined between six and seven hundred men, which number was afterward largely increased. They were treated with great neglect, unprovided with beds, fuel, or water.\*

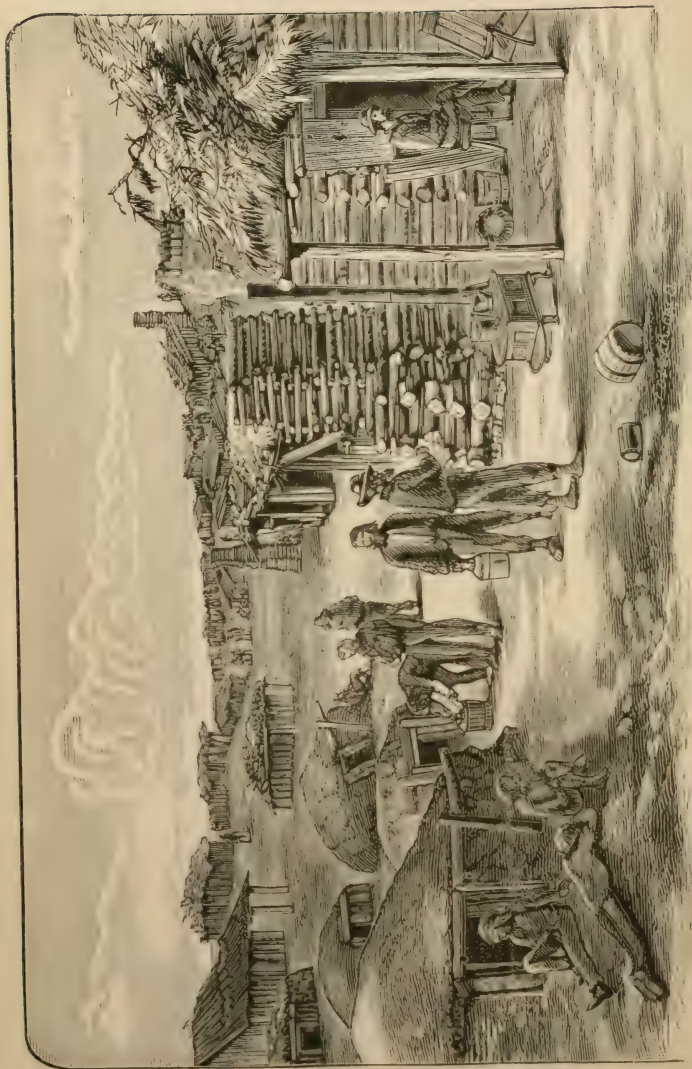
On the sixteenth day of October, 1864, there were two thousand, one hundred and fifty-one prisoners of war con-

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\* H. R., 199.







CAMP FORD, TEXAS.

fined within its narrow limits. The cooking was done by the prisoners themselves in the open area, and the smoke from the innumerable fires was insupportable to those beneath the shelter. Captain H. A. Anderson commanded the post.

The sleeping arrangements consisted of rough bunks, without straw or bedding of any kind save the hard plank and a few comforts. These bunks could accommodate but four hundred and thirty-two men. There was a single fire-place in the building, and fires were built sometimes upon the earthen floor of the barracks. The wood, when furnished at all, was either green sap pine or decayed oak from old fields.

The supply of water for drinking, cooking, and bathing, as well as washing, was conveyed from an artesian well, along an open street gutter for two hundred yards, thence under the street into the prison. In its course it gathered the washings of the hands, feet, faces, and heads of soldiers, citizens, and negroes; the slops of tubs, and the spittoons of groceries, offices, and hospitals, the wallowings and offal of hogs, dogs, cows, and horses.† It was an open sewer in the midst of a small town, and the receptacle of the filth, solid and liquid, which the careless, indifferent or vicious might cast into it.

The prisons here described, together with Andersonville, Millen, Savannah, Charleston, Columbia, and Macon, constitute the principal military posts occupied by Federal prisoners during the war. Those last named are fully described in the narratives which precede. One station for captives in the Trans-Mississippi Department shall suffice.

#### CAMP FORD.

This camp was located about six miles from Tyler, Texas, about one hundred miles nearly due west from Shreveport. On the arrival of the first detachment, of

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\* H. R., 732.

some six hundred men, they were camped in the open woods. Afterward, a stockade was built, inclosing two and a half acres, which was subsequently enlarged to six. No shelters were furnished for the men, and the only protection they had from the inclemency of the weather was such rude contrivances as they could construct of the limbs and boughs of trees, arranged in the form of cabins and thatched with mud. The usual dead line was an imaginary line some ten feet from the stockade, of which the sentry was the sole judge. Water was abundantly supplied, and no complaint is made for lack of it.

The remaining fifty-six places of confinement were of a temporary character, small and unimportant. The opportunity for the display of barbarity was on a diminished scale, but the suffering of the individual prisoner was not less keen, although the aggregate horror was smaller. Reminiscences of severe and malicious treatment by officers, soldiers, and citizens abound in charges of starvation, thirst, frost, and exposure, at Lynchburg, Tuscaloosa, Camp Groce; at Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta. In all of these experiences, whether disclosed by captured rebel documents or related by the prisoners themselves, there is the same unvaried tale of deprivation, indignity, severity. It is hardly to be presumed that this was the spontaneous sentiment of a people spread over so wide an area. There is every evidence of a directing hand—a thread running through all, which connected them with the same center.

#### IV.

##### FOOD, WATER, AND FUEL.

The discipline of an army requires that the common soldier should be entirely dependent upon those in command for his daily allowance of food. The variety, quantity, quality, and time of distribution must be regulated by officers appointed for that purpose, without consultation of individual tastes, habits, preferences, or wants.



The soldier is a child, and helpless, except for the one purpose for which he is placed in the ranks. His comfort, health, and life are, of necessity, in the hands of his government. He knows but one will: that of his immediate superior. He knows but one source of food: that, namely, of his commissary. He is taught to respect the hand that feeds him as the only source of his subsistence.

On the other hand, it is equally to the interest of his commander that the private be supplied in sufficient quantity with good, wholesome food, in reasonable variety and at regular intervals. History records many battles lost through the weakness of the troops, which was caused by the lack of proper and sufficient alimentation. Accordingly, the commissariat becomes in many respects the most important branch of the service, and has been made the subject of profound investigation in modern times, as it was of extensive experiment among ancient warlike nations. In armies operating over extensive geographical areas, embracing a large number of climatic changes and conditions, there is need of the closest attention to the details of the commissary department.

Nothing is better established in the physiological history of armies than that a fixed quantity per diem of well-cooked solid food is essential to maintain the health, strength, and energy of the men. No government can ignore the limits which scientific investigation and practical experience have fixed as the maximum and minimum. The amount given to the men in quarters is less than that issued in the field; for, in addition to the drainage of the vital resources caused by active exertion in the latter case, is the drainage caused by exposure to sudden and often violent atmospheric changes, against which the system can be fortified only by proper alimentation.

The testimony of all the prisoners shows the quantity of food issued to them by the rebel authorities to have been greatly below what was necessary for their health, even under the most favorable circumstances. All along the line of prison stations from Richmond to Camp Tyler

there is the same hollow, enfeebled cry for food. In but one instance, that at Savannah, do we miss the familiar sound. It forms the burden of the great bulk of evidence taken by the congressional committee, as it is the burden of every narrative published by the surviving victims. The cry for food went up from the crowded warehouses of Richmond, from the barren sands of Belle Isle. It made itself heard in the halls of the Confederate Congress, in the parlors of the Confederate executive. It fell upon pitiless ears there, as it fell elsewhere. Sudden and unforeseen accumulations of men may bring hunger and exposure for the time. Prisoners taken at the front, particularly in considerable numbers, may temporarily be unprovided. In the progress of a battle, such as was fought on so many fields during the late war, continuing for several days, the necessity of each party keeping its own active forces up to the proper fighting point, inevitably entailed hunger, and thirst, and exposure upon the non-participants in the fight. The fighting columns must be fed, even although prisoners or wounded men were starved. But, the captives removed from the field of action, the conditions changed. There is no excuse, no palliation for their deprivation then.

The ration afforded to men in quarters has been the subject of careful study in the military departments of Europe for many years, and the amount of food, as well as the quality and variety, most intelligently examined. As a result, we find as follows: The British soldier receives of solid food, in home service, forty-five ounces; the seamen of the royal navy, forty-four ounces; convicts, thirty-four ounces; male pauper, twenty-nine ounces; male lunatic, thirty-one ounces. The full diet of the hospitals of London furnishes from twenty-five to thirty-one ounces of solid food, besides from one to five pints of beer daily. The Russian soldier has about fifty ounces; the Turkish, more than forty ounces; the French, nearly fifty ounces; the Hessian, thirty-three ounces; the Yorkshire laborer, fifty ounces; United States navy, fifty ounces; and the

soldier of the United States army, about fifty ounces of solid food.\*

The United States Government issued to the rebel prisoners, at the beginning of the war, thirty-eight ounces of solid food per ration. This was reduced to thirty-four and a half ounces in June, 1864, the reduction being in the bread ration. The ration before the reduction was as follows:

Bread, eighteen ounces; or corn-meal, twenty ounces.

Beef, one pound; or bacon or pork, three-quarters of a pound.

Beans, eight quarts per one hundred rations; or hominy or rice, ten pounds per one hundred rations.

Sugar, fourteen pounds per one hundred rations.

Rio coffee, seven to nine pounds per one hundred men.

Adamantine candles, five; tallow candles, six, per one hundred men.

Soap, four pounds per one hundred men.

Salt, two quarts per one hundred men.

Molasses, four quarts per one hundred men.

Potatoes, one pound per ration, three times a week.

When beans were issued, hominy or rice was not issued.

These were the rations to which the prisoners were entitled. Bread was issued, in point of fact, and not corn-meal. Fresh beef was issued, during this time, four times a week. When fresh beef was issued, a pound and a quarter was given.

Subsequently to June 1, 1864, the rations to which the prisoner was entitled remained the same, but the amount actually issued to him was reduced as follows: Beef, two ounces; soft bread, four ounces; corn-meal, four ounces. Besides these there were, to every hundred rations, twelve and a half pounds of beans or peas; eight pounds of rice or hominy; four pounds of soap; three quarts of vinegar; three and three-quarters pounds of salt; and fifteen pounds of potatoes.

Sugar, and coffee or tea, were issued only to the sick

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\* *Martyria*, by Dr. Hamlin, p. 80.

and wounded, on the recommendation of the surgeon in charge, at the rate of twelve pounds of sugar, five pounds of ground or seven pounds of green coffee, or one pound of tea, to the one hundred rations, which was issued on alternate days.

The surplus of the regulation ration over that actually issued was sold, and the proceeds placed to the credit of the prison fund, and expended in the purchase of extra vegetables, bed-ticks, straw, knives and forks, and the like, for the benefit of the prisoners themselves.

Contrast with this variety and abundance the food supply furnished the Federal prisoner: Unbolted corn meal, ground with the cob, nine ounces; beef, four ounces; bacon, four ounces; peas, one-sixteenth of a quart; rice, one ounce; soft soap, one-thirty-second of a dram; salt, one-hundredth of a quart; molasses, one-three-hundredth of a quart.\* This was the ration at Andersonville. It was a little more at the other prisons, except at Florence, where it was less.

While the quantity of food issued was less than sufficient to support life and health, even had it been of the best selected materials, it was still farther reduced below the necessities of the prisoner by being mixed with refuse. The unbolted corn meal contained, besides fragments of the cob, portions of the husk and sometimes of the stalk. The beans (black or cow peas) were served as they came from the threshing floor, with the husk of the pea frequently mixed with it, unwinnowed and unsifted, filled with dirt, and many times so eaten by worms and bugs as to leave only the outer shell of the pea. When this ration was served from the cook house the loathsome bugs and worms floated upon the surface, and were skimmed off when the prisoner's spoon had escaped confiscation, or blown off, or eaten by the ravenous victim.

The bacon was tainted with rust, and often so decayed that the prisoner pulled it in pieces with his fingers and ate it raw, and so filled with maggots as to appear like a

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\* See H. R., 212, 213.



moving, living, wriggling mass of worms. Fresh beef was sometimes issued at Andersonville, which had, after killing, been thrown upon the ground and suffered to lie there in the hot sun until it was blown with flies and green with decomposition. To crown the fearful horror, the food was hauled to the famishing men in the same wagon in which they had, but a short time before, beheld their dead comrades carried out to the burial, half naked, and covered with scorbutic sores and gangrenous suppuration, with the worms that had consumed their living flesh still rioting in the dead remains; and all this filth was allowed to remain in the wagon and mingle with food the living were to eat.

At some of the prisons the rations were issued raw, and then the prisoner, without utensils for cooking, and many times without fuel, was compelled to eat it raw or starve.

The amount of salt issued for seasoning the food was too small to be considered. The meal was mixed with water in such vessels as the ingenuity of the prisoner could contrive, and baked upon a chip before the fire, if, as said above, there were materials of which to make it. Failing in this, they sometimes placed it in an abundance of water and allowed it to ferment, forming a sort of acid, which they called vinegar, and drank. In a pitiful way they prized this preparation, because they considered it a remedy for scurvy!

The bread issued to them was made of the same kind of meal as was issued raw. Many of the prisoners assert that it was only warmed through, and in the inside of the loaf was entirely raw. Many stories are told of the underground corn found in the middle of the loaf.

Often, and for the most trivial reasons, or for no assigned reasons at all, the miserable pittance was withheld entirely for one to three days. With characteristic economy, back rations were never issued. If the day passed without the customary food, it was entered on the credit side in the books of the Confederate commissariat.

To such extremities were these famished men reduced, that they caught rats, cooked and ate them with greedy

relish. At Belle Isle, they enticed the lieutenant-commandant's dog within the inclosure, killed and ate him. At Salisbury, they devoured, with the greed of wild beasts, the heads and entrails of animals issued to them for food. At Florence and Andersonville, they craved the bones from which the meat had been stripped, and boiled them in the water of the swamp for soup—and this not for one day, but for weeks and months. More than this, to assuage the pangs of hunger, they were driven to the most revolting practices. At Belle Isle, some of the prisoners discovered the barrel into which the offal from the rations of the guard had been thrown, and, obtaining permission to go out to see the commandant, they dipped their hats into the filthy mass of scraps of meat, rinds, bones, and slops, and returned to their quarters to enjoy the feast. There was still one lower depth to which they were forced to descend; so sharp were the cravings of hunger, that they watched the excrement and vomit of the dying comrades for undigested food.

This is no overdrawn picture. Four hundred pages of testimony taken by the congressional committee, from men widely scattered over the country, who had survived their treatment at the hands of the rebels, are filled with accounts like these. Men who, on entering the prisons, turned the scale at one hundred and seventy pounds, had fallen off to ninety, after an imprisonment of a few months—not by sickness, not by wasting fevers, but by the slow process of starvation. To this scene of wretchedness, history furnishes no parallel.

Besides the scanty ration thus furnished, there is yet another misery which the Federal prisoner was compelled to undergo. The water supply, always meager, was full of pollution. At Belle Isle, it was brought within reach of the prisoners through a semicircular water-way; the water of the river entering at its upper end, and flowing out a short distance below. The water frontage of the camp was small; upon it the sinks were placed. It was accessible through a narrow lane, as heretofore described. Prisoners assert that they were compelled to remove the hu-

man excrement upon its surface in order to dip their water-buckets or cups for water. The wells, subsequently dug within the inclosure, for a time supplied a wholesome quantity; but, as the camp filled up with men, these became contaminated by seepage, and undoubtedly were the means of introducing and intensifying the diseases to which the prisoners were exposed.

At Salisbury, the main supply of water was wells dug by the prisoners themselves. It seemed no part of the Confederate duty to prisoners of war, to provide for them any thing but food and guards. In this respect, they followed their policy toward their slaves, whom they were accustomed to treat in a similar manner; there being this difference in the conditions—the slave supplemented his ration by nocturnal depredations upon the plantation, the prisoner did not. The wells dug at Salisbury were painfully excavated by the prisoners, but their gaolers furnished them with no implements for this purpose. They used their fingers and pieces of canteens, and laboriously opened, into the hard, stiff clay, a passage to the cooling liquid. It was not necessary to locate this prison so far from a stream of water. The few buildings here employed for hospital and commissary purposes, could, at small expense, have found a substitute upon the banks of the abundant stream that flowed a half a mile away, in cheap and commodious structures.

According to the report of Inspector-General Hall, this lack of a proper water supply was a very serious ground of complaint. The nine wells which the prisoners had provided were supplemented by water from the stream, to which the prisoners had access, a certain number at a time, with buckets and barrels. The supply from all these sources was not sufficient for more than cooking and drinking purposes. Nothing was allowed for bathing, for washing the hands or faces, or the scanty remnants of clothing which they possessed. The report of Inspector Hall was made when the number of prisoners was a little more than five thousand men. The number was afterward



increased to upward of ten thousand, with no increase of the water supply. Prisoners assert that, by nine o'clock in the morning, the wells were exhausted. For the remainder of the day, the detail "with buckets and barrels" furnished the only supply. It was drawn from the wells in tin cups, boot legs, hats, etc. There was extreme difficulty experienced in obtaining guards to accompany the prisoners outside the camp for the purpose of getting fuel. The same difficulty was experienced at Salisbury in the procurement of guards for the water detail. When guards could not be had, the wells furnished the supply.

To one unaccustomed to the feeding and watering of large bodies of men, the question of the quantity of water necessary to the comfort of a single individual appears of a trivial nature. Yet water is as necessary to the well being of the animal as food, and is as indispensable for the nutrition of the body. The absence of water is a certain source of suffering and disease. The world is familiar with the terrible sufferings in siege and shipwreck from thirst. In connection with the juices of the stomach, it is the solvent for food, and converts it from the solid condition into a state fit for absorption into the system. To deprive the system of this liquid is, therefore, to deprive it of food, and to induce and encourage disease.

Besides this deprivation of water for the purposes of cooking and drinking, there was the lack of the necessary amount for washing the apparel and for bathing. Cleanliness of person was impossible. That this was the result of their necessities, and not the choice of the prisoners, is shown by the eagerness with which they emerged from their mud burrows during the showers that fell, and removing the filthy rags that partially covered them, rubbed each other with their hands, in keen enjoyment of the refreshing exercise. How much this simple bath contributed to their health no one can estimate.

The fuel allowed in quarters to each mess of six men in the United States army is one hundred and twenty-eight cubic feet per month from April to October, inclusive. This is exclusive of that used in cooking. During the



months of November, December, January, and February, the fuel ration is increased one-fourth at stations north of the thirty-ninth degree of north latitude, and one-third at stations north of the forty-third degree. During the cold winter of 1863-4, at Belle Isle, according to the statements of a large number of the prisoners, the amount did not exceed one-eighth of a cord to one hundred men. Mr. Dorrence Atwater, in relating his experience, says: "Fuel was not furnished us regularly. We often went several days in the severest weather without any warmth except what came from our bodies. No stoves were furnished to the prisoners. A single stick of pine cord wood would be issued to one tent. It would be split into splinters, and divided among the occupants. Each man's portion was about the size of a cigar box." \* The number occupying the tent referred to by Mr. Atwater was thirteen.

In the inclosed and covered prisons at Richmond, four armfuls of wood were issued for one room per day, and at Danville, when issued at all, it was in about the same quantity. At Belle Isle, Richmond, and Danville, cooked rations were issued. At Salisbury, the men were divided into squads of one hundred each, from one to seven of whom was detailed to go outside to procure it. The ration was what each detail was able to bring in in their arms. It was green pine.

At Florence, the same complaint is made as at Salisbury. Although the weather had become cold when they were placed in the open stockade, the wood issued was barely sufficient to cook the diminished ration. The creek that supplied them with water froze over, and ice formed in the little pools left over night in the campgrounds. At Andersonville, the men burrowed into the ground with their fingers to gather roots with which to cook their rations. So destitute were they, that they often fought each other for the melancholy privilege of carrying the dead body of a comrade outside the prison pen, because on their return they could gather a few

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\* H. R., 1024.

chips or twigs with which to cook their rations of meal. To such straits were they reduced in a country where the native forests exist in profuse abundance.

## V.

### KNOWLEDGE POSSESSED BY THE REBEL AUTHORITIES.

To fix the responsibility of this dreadful condition of the prisoners upon the authorities at Richmond, it becomes necessary to show that they possessed a full knowledge of the treatment. The evidence upon this point is partially inferential, partially direct. The strength of the circumstantial evidence rests in the credibility of the testimony and in the combination of facts connected with the situation:

I. The number of prisoners remaining in rebel hands was so great after the practical nullification of the cartel of July, 1862, by Commissioner Oulds, that it became necessary to organize a special military department for their care and safe-keeping. Previous to this time the prisoners captured east of the Mississippi had been, for the most part, detained at Richmond awaiting exchange. It is true, that Libby and Castle Thunder had already acquired a degree of celebrity, but the number of prisoners was comparatively small, and the treatment to which they were subjected was less severe, or at least less known. The proclamation of President Davis, declaring outlawry against the officers of General Pope's command, followed by a proclamation relegating officers of colored troops to the civil authorities of the states in which they might be captured to be tried for exciting what he was pleased to term a servile insurrection, had a tendency to stop the exchange of officers. The Federal government found it necessary, in order to protect its own officers, to hold such as it captured from the rebels as hostages for the proper treatment of its own men in rebel hands. The refusal to exchange officers naturally led to a refusal to ex-

change enlisted men, so that in the latter part of 1862, but more particularly before the autumn of 1863, exchange had practically ceased. This brought about an accumulation of prisoners, especially at Richmond, and grave questions arose as to the disposition to be made of them.

At no time from the outset of the war did the prisoners in rebel hands receive the consideration usually accorded to military captives in modern times. They were confined in close, illy-ventilated quarters; they were placed upon a small supply of rations and fuel; they suffered indignities at the hands of their guards, and of the officers of the prison. This may have been brought about by lack of preparation for their reception and care, rather than by design. The bitter feeling engendered by the violent harangues of southern orators, and by the public press, previous to the breaking out of hostilities, had, indeed, wrought the people at large to a pitch of exasperation, not unmingled with contempt, which found expression in abusive epithets and petty annoyances, that may have been beyond the knowledge of the military authorities.

As the non-exchange policy continued, the accumulation of prisoners of war in and around Richmond, forced upon the rebel authorities a knowledge of the manner in which they were treated by those in command over them. Reports of surgeons in charge of the prisoners' hospitals, letters addressed to President Davis, the evidence of his own inspection, the complaints of the prisoners themselves to officers connected with the war department, furnished such tales of suffering as forced the issuance of orders from the department, detailing special inspectors of prisons, with orders to report the result of their inspection. It is not probable that these movements in the war offices at Richmond, could have taken place without the knowledge and acquiescence of those highest in authority there. It is impossible, that a great bureau of the military department of the Confederacy could have carried on its operations so secretly as to have escaped the notice of the chiefs of that department. It is equally incredible, that such a

subordinate bureau should have acted without general orders, or should have been invested with such discretionary powers as to relieve it from making detailed reports, that would carry correct information to the heads of the war department. The treatment of the prisoners during the memorable winter of 1863-4, was a matter of public notoriety at Richmond. At Belle Isle, they were within sight of the executive mansion. Their miserable state was known of all men in the city. It was the subject of conversation upon the street; of wretched attempts at humor in the daily press.\* Prisoners report the visits of President Davis to Libby and to Belle Isle, whether of curiosity or of official duty is not known; of General John Morgan, and others high in the confidence of the rebel government; of Mrs. Seddon, wife of the secretary of war. The latter visit is not without interest, and a report of it is here given as made by one who was favored by the presence of this lady: "We were visited [at Libby] by Mrs. Seddon, wife of the rebel secretary of war, who, after asking us a few questions, said we deserved to be gibbeted; called us hell hounds, hell monsters, etc.; said she would be glad to see us hung; regretted that her government had not the power to do it; but that we should be confined in a dungeon, and fed on bread and water, until we rotted."† The offense which aroused the ire of this highly-bred southern lady, was a participation in Kilpatrick's raid to relieve the prisoners then rotting in the warehouses of Richmond.

Besides the indirect evidence of a knowledge on the part of the rebel officials of the wretched condition of the prisoners of war, above cited, there is further direct proof of at least a guilty acquiescence, if not of participation, in their barbarous treatment. The following letter is placed in evidence; it is among the captured rebel archives, in possession of the war department at Washington:

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\* See "Richmond Examiner," January 21, 1864.

† Captain J. A. Clark. H. R., 1109.



“FIRST REGIMENT, GEORGIA RESERVES.

“CAMP SUMTER, *June 23, 1864.*

“RESPECTED SIR:—Being but a private in the ranks at this place, consequently, if I see any thing to condemn (as I do) I have no power to correct it. Yet, as a humane being, and one that believes that we should ‘do as we would be done by,’ I proceed to inform you of some things that I know you are ignorant of; and in the first place, I will say that I have no cause to love the Yankees (they having driven myself and family from our home in New Orleans to seek our living among strangers), yet I think prisoners should have some showing. Inside our prison walls all around, there is a space about twelve feet wide called the ‘dead line.’ If a prisoner crosses that line, the sentinels are ordered to shoot him. Now, we have many thoughtless boys here who think the killing of a ‘Yank’ will make them great men; as a consequence, every day or two there are prisoners shot. When the officer of the guard goes to the sentry’s stand, there is a dead or badly wounded man invariably within their own lines. The sentry, of course, says he was across the ‘dead line’ when he shot him. He is told he done exactly right and is a good sentry. Last Sabbath there was two shot in their tents at one shot; the boy said that he shot at one across the ‘dead line.’ Night before last there was one shot near me (I being on guard). The sentry said that the Yankee made one step across the line to avoid a mud hole. He shot him through the bowels, and when the officer of the guard got there, he was lying inside their own lines. He (the sentry), as usual, told him that he stepped across, but fell back inside. The officer told him it was exactly right. Now, my dear sir, I know you are opposed to such measures, and I make this statement to you knowing you to be a soldier, statesman, and Christian, that, if possible, you may correct such things, together with many others that exist here. And yet, if you send an agent here, he will, of course, go among the officers, tell his business, and be told that ‘all is well.’ But let a

good man come here as a private citizen and mix with the privates, and stay one week, and if he don't find out things revolting to humanity, then I am deceived. I shall put my name to this, believing that you will not let the officers over me see it, otherwise I would suffer, most probably.

“Yours, most respectfully,

“JAMES E. ANDERSON.”

“P. S.—Excuse pencil.

“PRESIDENT JEFF DAVIS.”

This letter had the following indorsements:

“James E. Anderson, First Regiment, Georgia Reserves, to Jeff Davis, Camp Sumter, Georgia, June 23, 1864. Asks correction of the brutal shooting of prisoners (Yankees) in that camp, without cause.”

“A. G.:—Referred to Brigadier-General Winder. By order.

“J. A. CAMPBELL,

“A. S. W.”

“File.

“July 23, 1864.

“Respectfully referred, by direction of the president, to the honorable secretary of war.

“J. C. IVES,

“Colonel and Aide-de-Camp.”

“Received July 23, 1864. Received A. and I. G. O., July 25, 1864.”

The following letter, also, was directed to Jefferson Davis, and, like the previous one, was found among the rebel archives captured at Richmond:

“STATEBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA, October 12, 1864.

“DEAR SIR:—Inclosed you will find an account of the terrible sufferings of the Yankee prisoners at Florence, South Carolina.

"In the name of all that is holy, is there nothing that can be done to relieve such dreadful suffering?"

"If such things are allowed to continue, they will most surely draw down some awful judgment upon our country. It is a most *horrible national sin, that can not go unpunished*. If we can not give them food and shelter, for *God's sake* parole them, and send them back to Yankee land; but don't *starve the miserable creatures to death*.

"Don't think that I have any liking for the Yankee. I have none. Those near and dear to me have suffered *too much* from their tyranny for me to have any thing but *hatred to them*; but I have not yet become *quite brute* enough to know of such suffering without trying to do something —*even for a Yankee*.

"Yours, respectfully,

"SABINA DISMUKES."

#### Indorsements:

"Sabina Dismukes, Stateburg, South Carolina, October 12, 1864. Forwards newspaper article on treatment Yankee prisoners at Florence, South Carolina. Asks that they may be fed or paroled."

"Respectfully referred, by direction of the president, to the honorable secretary of war.

"BURTON N. HARRISON,

"*Private Secretary*."

"A. G.: Refer to Brigadier-General Winder.

"By order,

J. A. CAMPBELL,

"October 23, 1864."

"A. S. W."

"Respectfully referred to General Winder.

"By order A. and I. General.

"JOHN W. RIELY,

"*A. A. General*."

"A. and I. G. O., October 28, 1864."

"Returned, January 7, 1865."

"Returned, November 19, 1864."

"Received, A. and I. G. O., October 24, 1864."

"Received, October 18, 1864."

"Received at Camp Lawton, November 12, 1864."

"Respectfully returned to the adjutant and inspector-general. The prisoners in South Carolina are not under my command. I can give no information; nor can I express an opinion. . . .

"JOHN H. WINDER,

*"Brigadier-General."*

"CAMP LAWTON, *November 14, 1864.*"

"Respectfully referred to Brigadier-General Gardner.

"By command of the secretary of war.

"H. L. CLAY,

*"A. A. G."*

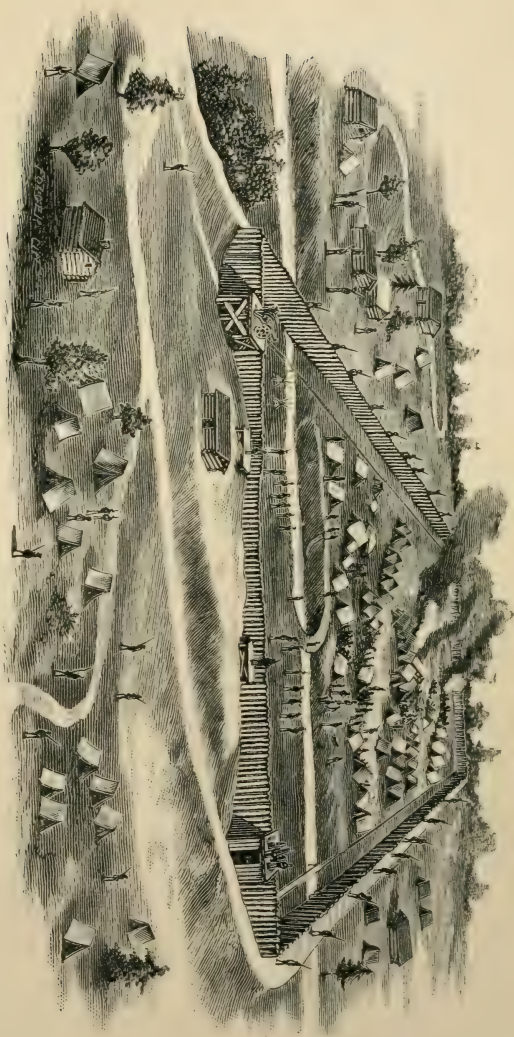
"A. and I. G. O., *November 24, 1864.*"

The clipping inclosed in the above letter was from the "Sumter (S. C.) Watchman," and headed "The Prisoners at Florence." Extracts are here reproduced:

"MR. EDITOR:—It may not be uninteresting to your numerous readers to hear something from the Yankee camp at Florence. . . .

"The camp we found full of what were once human beings, but who would scarcely now be recognized as such. In an old field, with no inclosure but the living wall of sentinels who guard them night and day, are several thousand filthy, diseased, famished men, with no hope of relief except by death. A few dirty rags stretched on poles give them a poor protection from the hot sun and heavy dews. All were in rags, and barefoot, and crawling with vermin. As we passed around the line of guards, I saw one of them brought out from his miserable booth by two of his companions, and laid upon the ground to die. He was nearly naked. His companions pulled his cap over his face and straightened out his limbs. Before they





PRISON PEN, FLORENCE, N. C.



turned to leave him he was dead. A slight movement of the limbs, and all was over. The captive was free! The commissary's tent was near one side of the square, and near it the beef was laid upon boards preparatory to its distribution. This sight seemed to excite the prisoners, as the smell of blood does the beasts of a menagerie. They surged up as near the lines as they were allowed, and seemed, in their eagerness, about to break over. While we were on the ground, a heavy rain came up, and they seemed greatly to enjoy it, coming out *a puris naturalibus*, opening their mouths to catch the drops, while one would wash off another with his hands, and then receive from him the like kind office. Numbers get out at night and wander to the neighboring houses in quest of food.

“From the camp of the living, we pass to the camp of the dead—the hospital—a transition which reminded me of Satan's soliloquy :

“Which way I fly is hell: myself am hell;  
And in the lowest deeps, a lower deep,  
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide.’

“A few tents covered with pine tops were crowded with the dying and the dead in every stage of corruption. Some lay in prostrate helplessness; some had crowded under the shelter of the bushes; some were rubbing their skeleton limbs. Twenty or thirty of them die daily—most of them, as I was informed, of the scurvy. The corpses lay by the roadside waiting for the dead cart, their glassy eyes turned to heaven, the flies swarming in their mouths, their big toes tied together with a cotton string, and their skeleton arms folded on their breasts. You would hardly know them to be men, so sadly do hunger, disease, and wretchedness change the human face divine. Presently came the carts. They were carried a little distance to trenches dug for the purpose, and tumbled in like so many dogs. A few pine tops were thrown upon the bodies, a few shovelfuls of dirt, and then haste was made to open a new ditch for other victims. The burying parties were Yankees detailed for the work, an

appointment which, as the sergeant told me, they consider as a favor, for they get a little more to eat, and enjoy fresh air. . . . HOWARD."

Under date of May 5, 1864, General Howell Cobb, commanding the Georgia Reserves, made a report upon Andersonville, inclosing with it the report of Surgeon E. J. Eldridge, Chief Surgeon Georgia Reserves, under date of May 6, 1864. General Cobb called attention to the overcrowded condition of the prison at that time, when it contained about twelve thousand men. He recommends the preparation of another prison, and says: "The effect of increasing the number within the present area must be a terrific increase of sickness and death during the summer months." Surgeon Eldridge reports upon the bad condition of the prison and prisoners, and makes suggestions with a view to the betterment of the same. These reports were indorsed as follows:

"Howell Cobb, Major-General, Head-quarters Georgia Reserves. Macon, May 5, 1864. Report on the prison at Andersonville, Georgia. One inclosure, A. and I. G. O., received May 26, 1864. Received A. and I. G. O., May 21, 1864."

"E. J. Eldridge, Chief Surgeon, Head-quarters Georgia Reserves. Macon, May 6, 1864. Report on the prison at Andersonville, Georgia."

On the 5th of August, 1864, Lieutenant-Colonel D. T. Chandler, of the Confederate States Army, made an inspection report on the Andersonville prison, in which is found the following: "No shelter whatever, nor materials for constructing any, had been provided by the prison authorities, and the ground being entirely bare of trees, none is within reach of the prisoners; nor has it been possible, from the overcrowded state of the inclosure, to arrange the camp with any system. Each man has been permitted to protect himself as best he can, by stretching his blanket, or whatever he may have about him, on such sticks as he can procure. Of other shelter there has been none. There is no medical attendance within the stock-



ade. Many (twenty yesterday) are carted out daily who have died from unknown causes, and whom the medical officers have never seen. The dead are hauled out by the wagon load, and buried without coffins, their hands, in many instances, being first mutilated with an ax, in the removal of any finger rings they may have. Raw rations have been issued to a very large portion who are entirely unprovided with proper utensils, and furnished so limited a supply of fuel, they are compelled to dig with their hands in the filthy marsh before mentioned for roots, etc. No soap or clothing has ever been issued. After inquiry, the writer is confident that, with slight exertions, green corn and other anti-scorbutics could readily be obtained. The present hospital arrangements were only intended for the accommodation of ten thousand men, and are totally insufficient, both in character and extent, for the present need—the number of prisoners being now more than three times that great. The number of cases requiring medical treatment is in increased ratio. It is impossible to state the number of sick, many dying within the stockade whom the medical officers have never seen or heard of till their remains are brought out for interment.”

In an additional report, date and place the same, Lieutenant-Colonel Chandler says further: “My duty requires me to respectfully recommend a change in the officer in command of the post, Brigadier-General J. H. Winder, and the substitution in his place of some one who unites both energy and good judgment with some feeling of humanity and consideration for the welfare and comfort (so far as is consistent with their safe-keeping) of the vast number of unfortunates placed under his control; some one who, at least, will not advocate deliberately and in cold blood the propriety of leaving them in their present condition until their number has been sufficiently reduced by death to make the present arrangement suffice for their accommodation; who will not consider it a matter of self-laudation and boasting that he has never been inside of

the stockade, a place the horrors of which it is difficult to describe, and which is a disgrace to civilization."

These reports were indorsed as follows:

"Andersonville, Sumter county, Georgia, August 5, 1864, D. T. Chandler, Lieutenant-Colonel and Assistant Adjutant and Inspector-General. Report of inspection of military prison at Andersonville. Eighteen inclosures."

"Andersonville, Sumter county, Georgia, August 5, 1864, D. T. Chandler, Lieutenant-Colonel, and Assistant Adjutant and Inspector-General.

"Additional report of inspection at Andersonville. Inclosure. Extract made for C. S. General."

"ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE,

*"August 18, 1864.*

"Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War. The condition of the prison at Andersonville is a reproach to us as a nation.

"Colonel Chandler's recommendations are concurred in.

"By order of General S. Cooper.

"R. H. CHILTON,

*A. A. and I. G."*

"SECRETARY OF WAR:--These reports show a condition of things at Andersonville which calls very loudly for interposition of the department, in order that a change may be made.

J. A. CAMPBELL,

*"Assistant Secretary of War."*

In Colonel Chandler's examination upon the Wirz trial, this report, captured among the rebel archives, was put in evidence, and the following further indorsement, partially obliterated, was upon it:

"This report discloses a condition of things imperatively demanding prompt and decisive measures of relief. The discomforts and sufferings of the prisoners seemed almost incredible, and the frightful percentum of mortality steadily increasing, until in the month of July it had at-

tained the extent of sixty-two and seven-tenths per thousand, and appears to be only a necessary consequence of the criminal indifference of the authorities charged with their care and custody. No effectual remedy for all the evils seems available, so long as the numbers are in such large excess over that for which the prisons were designed; but some things can be . . . at once to ameliorate the con . . . Colonel Chandler, whose recommend . . . are approved by Colonel Chilton, suggests the relief of General Winder and substitut . . . of some other commander. The state . . . things disclosed in the reports can not . . .

“WITNESS: These indorsements show the report was laid before the Secretary of War. I do not know of any action taken on the report by the Secretary of War. General Winder was assigned to the command of all the prisoners about two weeks afterward, I think. He was assigned as commissary-general of prisoners.”\*

From the testimony of Captain C. M. Selph, A. A. G., C. S. Army, before the court in the Wirz trial, it is scarcely to be doubted that the reports of Colonel Chandler, and the inclosures accompanying them—reports of prison commandants, surgeons, etc.—were brought to the personal notice of Jefferson Davis.

In August, 1864, Surgeon Joseph Jones, of the Confederate army—now of New Orleans, and one of the most distinguished physicians of the country—under authority from the surgeon-general of the Confederate army, visited Andersonville and made a most elaborate report upon the place and its inmates. No one who reads this exhibit will ever doubt any thing which prisoners have written concerning the miseries of that prison. It is too long for entire reproduction, and a brief quotation, relating to space, shelter, police and order, is made here:

“The Federal prisoners were gathered from all parts of the Confederate States east of the Mississippi and crowded into the confined space, until, in the month of June, the

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\* H. R., p. 133.

average number of square feet of ground to each prisoner was only 32.3, or less than four square yards. These figures represent the stockade in a better light even than it really was; for a considerable breadth of land along the stream, flowing from west to east between the hills, was low and boggy, and covered with the excrements of the men, and thus rendered wholly uninhabitable, and, in fact, useless for every purpose except defecation. The pines and other small trees and shrubs which originally were scattered sparsely over these hills were in a short time cut down by the prisoners for fire-wood, and no shade tree was left in the entire inclosure of the stockade. With their characteristic industry and ingenuity, the Federals constructed for themselves small huts and caves, and attempted to shield themselves from the rain and sun and night damps and dew. But few tents were distributed to the prisoners, and those were, in most cases, torn and rotten. In the location and arrangements of these huts, no order appears to have been followed; in fact, regular streets appear to be out of the question on so crowded an area—especially, too, as large bodies of prisoners were from time to time added suddenly and without any preparations. The irregular arrangement of the huts and imperfect shelters was very unfavorable for the maintenance of a proper system of police.

“The police and internal economy of the prison was left almost entirely in the hands of the prisoners themselves; the duties of the Confederate soldiers acting as guards being limited to the occupation of the boxes or lookouts ranged around the stockade at regular intervals, and to the manning of the batteries at the angles of the prison. Even judicial matters pertaining to the prisoners themselves, as the detection and punishment of such crimes as theft and murder, appear to have been in great measure abandoned to the prisoners. . . .

“The volume of water was not sufficient to wash away the feces, and they accumulated in such quantities as to form a mass of liquid excrement. Heavy rains caused the water of the stream to rise, and, as the arrangements for



the passage of the increased amount of water out of the stockade were insufficient, the liquid feces overflowed the low grounds and covered them several inches after the subsidence of the waters. The action of the sun upon this putrefying mass of excrements and fragments of bread and meat and bones excited most rapid fermentation and developed a horrible stench. . . .

“From want of proper police and hygienic regulations alone, it is not wonderful that from February 24 to September 21, 1864, nine thousand four hundred and seventy-nine deaths, nearly one-third the entire number of prisoners, have been recorded.”

The following extracts are made from a report of Surgeon William A. Carrington, of General Winder's staff, upon the condition of the military hospitals at Richmond:

“The great mortality and suffering among our prisoners has been a cause of constant care and painful solicitude to me. Daily reports have been made to the general commanding, and the surgeon-general, of the mortality, etc. Inclosures Nos. 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 will show that I made requisition on the proper authority for additional hospital accommodation, and named the Texas Hospital, General Hospital No. 10, General Hospital No. 20, and General Hospital No. 23, in succession, as proper buildings. I also offered the Third Alabama Hospital when closed, and proposed to use for this purpose Howard's Grove Hospital, which has 1,150 beds, is temporarily closed, and is isolated from the city and all other buildings; or part of Chimborazo Hospital, which has 3,200 beds. I was informed that they could not be used for this purpose, as guard sufficient could not be furnished, and that only in buildings with several stories and few entrances could the sick and wounded prisoners be guarded with the force furnished.

“I brought the matter to the attention of the surgeon-general in a personal interview; told him of the difficulties existing, and that I had represented the violation of hygienic laws in the prisons and prison hospitals without

effect, and understood from his remarks that the matter was one of international policy and military control. . . .

"I lost no occasion to make known to the proper authorities the violation of ordinary hygienic laws, and, while I looked upon the spectacle with pain and mortification, I was deterred from further remonstrance by a feeling that it was supererogatory, and might be understood as disrespectful. Large, well-ventilated, and completely organized hospitals near the city have been empty during the whole of this time. They were offered and refused. . . .

"WILLIAM A. CARRINGTON,

*"Medical Director.*

"GENERAL JOHN H. WINDER."

To this report, which is dated March 23, 1864, is appended the following :

"NOTE.—When the three hospital buildings were separate Confederate hospitals, they contained 650 beds, room being left for store-rooms, kitchen, apothecary shops, mess-rooms, dining-rooms, bath-rooms, and offices. The officers' portion of the hospital also contained more than 100 beds, making 750 beds. W. A. C." \*

## VI.

### ABILITY OF THE CONFEDERATE AUTHORITIES TO RELIEVE THE SUFFERINGS OF THE PRISONERS.

That in some respects the Confederate authorities were unable to relieve the terrible sufferings endured by the prisoners in their hands must be admitted. The strict blockade of the coast prevented the importation of medicines, particularly those prepared from exotic plants. The chemical works of the South were neither numerous nor extensive. They were limited in their supply of

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\* H. R. 596-7.

quinine and of the various preparations made from opium, the lack of which was severely felt, not only by the prisoners, but by the sick of their own armies also. Their only dependence for these remedies was upon their captures of hospital stores, and blockade runners. Remedies of other kinds were nearly inaccessible, and there was probably little skill in chemical technology among the southern scientists, even if it had been possible to procure the materials for the manufacture of remedies for the various diseases incident to the climate of the South.

Although the dispensaries of the Richmond hospitals are said to have been well equipped in the early part of the war, there is reason to believe that in the latter years the supply had become depleted to such an extent as to render the services of the physician nearly useless in diseases of the malarial type.

It is claimed by the apologists for the wretched treatment that our prisoners received in rebel hospitals, that the Richmond authorities endeavored to negotiate the purchase of medical supplies of the United States government, paying for the same with cotton, to be delivered in New York; that they pledged the honor of their government that the supplies so purchased should be used exclusively for the benefit of Union prisoners. No record of any offer of this kind is published in the report of the War Department upon the treatment of prisoners of war. But if such a proposition is admitted to have been made, the fact, well known to the United States authorities, that clothing and food sent by the government and by the friends of prisoners in rebel hands, were generally diverted from the purpose to which they were assigned, would lead them to doubt the good faith of their enemies, and to have little reliance upon their pledge of honor.

Admitting the inability of the Richmond authorities to furnish a well-equipped medical department for the prisoners, and that suffering and loss of life on this account can not be charged against them, because, through the exigencies of war, they were unable to procure them, the great and most important of the causes which pro-

duced the enormous mortality of Union prisoners was not due to this lack. There was another and a much larger factor in the dreadful result.

1. The prisoners, as has been seen, were crowded into buildings entirely too small for the accommodation of the numbers incarcerated in them, or into open stockades, without shelter from the heat or from the rain. In the Libby prison there were more than eleven hundred men confined at one time. Taking the measurement of the building at 100 x 105 feet on each of the two stories, it would give less than 25 square feet to a man. In this crowded condition, they lived day after day with no beds, no bunks, no seats, but the bare floor. They had been deprived of the greater part of their clothing, as blankets and overcoats, at the beginning of their prison life. They were forbidden to approach the windows for fresh air. They were allowed no exercise in the open space. They had no means of bathing or of washing, except such as could be obtained from the faucet of the hydrant in their room. The sinks which they were obliged to use were in the room in which they were confined, and the atmosphere was impregnated with sewer gas. Surely this was not beyond the control of the commissary-general of prisoners or of the war department. Like conditions are found in all the other prison buildings in which officers were confined.

In the prisons for privates, the conveniences were even more restricted. The men were more densely crowded; many of them were nearly naked, having been stripped of coats, vests, and boots either at the time of capture or upon admission to the prison. They were not furnished with fuel, or with any means of using it had it been furnished. They had no organization for policing their rooms, nor were they allowed any from their captors. They had no facilities for bathing their bodies, nor for washing the tatters which constituted their apparel. The food given them induced laxity of the bowels, but they were not afforded suitable means for taking care of themselves. When their prison floor was scrubbed, they were



compelled to lie upon it for sleep before it became dry. They were kept without exercise and without fresh air. At Danville, they were denied a necessary supply of water, even for drinking. Parasites swarmed upon their bodies; they filled their hair, and the rebels deprived them of their combs. Discomfort, amounting to a plague, tormented them when they awoke and when they slept. Hunger, thirst, fever for want of water, sickness, parasitic pests, cold, dampness, vitiated air, contact with misery—these attended them every-where and at all times. If there was not food in the southern states for these men, surely there was air, fresh, pure, and vitalizing; there was abundance of sparkling water; the land was covered with boundless forest. Lumber trees grew in the greatest profusion in the near vicinity. Bunks would have been constructed had the prisoners been permitted to build them. Among the soldiers in the northern army, there was scarcely a man who had not some mechanical skill with tools. Warm, and even soft beds could have been made of the "pine straw" that lay rotting beneath their forest trees. Rude it might have been, but far better than the hard and oftentimes damp floor.

In the open stockades the situation increased the wretchedness a hundred fold. Here the men were crowded together in herds like cattle. They were surrounded with high walls in an open pen without shade or shelter. They were compelled, at Andersonville, to drink the water into which their guards had thrown the offal of their camp and the cooks the fragments of the kitchen. Their bed was the damp ground; their covering, the sky. In the open stockade at Salisbury the supply of water was half a mile distant, except what was obtained from wells made by the prisoners themselves. When it is remembered that the only tools they had for digging these wells were their fingers and parts of canteens, the depth to which they could be sunk will be readily understood. In the hard, sticky clay of this pen, inhabited by ten thousand men, the surface water, carrying the washings of the camp, filled the wells. At Belle

Isle, the prisoners were reduced to similar sources for the water supply. The sum is this: In a country abounding in timber, they were shelterless and fireless; in the midst of the best watered country in the world, they expired of thirst and rotted with filth. Could the Richmond authorities have remedied this?

The real cause of the great mortality at Andersonville is developed in the report of Surgeon Joseph Jones, P. A. C. S., acting under orders of S. P. Moore, surgeon-general of the Confederate army. After describing the structure and defenses of the stockade, Dr. Jones proceeds: "The ground inclosed by the innermost stockade lies in the form of a parallelogram, the larger diameter running almost due north and south. This space includes the northern and southern opposing sides of two hills, between which a stream of water runs from west to east. The surface soil of these two hills is composed chiefly of sand, with varying admixtures of clay and oxide of iron. The clay is sufficiently tenacious to give a considerable degree of consistency to the soil. The internal structure of the hills, as revealed by the deep wells, is similar to that already described. The alternate layers of clay and sand, as well as the oxide of iron, which forms, in its various combinations, a cement to the sand, allow of extensive tunneling. The prisoners not only constructed numerous dirt huts, with balls of clay and sand taken from the wells which they have excavated all over those hills, but they have also, in some cases, tunneled extensively from these wells. The lower portions of these hills, bordering on the stream, are wet and boggy from the constant oozing of the water. The stockade was built originally to accommodate only ten thousand prisoners, and included, at first, seventeen acres. Near the close of June, the area was enlarged by the addition of ten acres. The ground added was on the slope of the northern hill. . . .

"Within the circumscribed area of the stockade, the Federal prisoners were compelled to perform all the offices of life—cooking, washing, urinating, defecating, exercise, and sleeping. During the month of March, the prison

was less crowded than at any subsequent time, and then the average space of ground to each prisoner was only 98.7 square feet, or less than eleven square yards. The Federal prisoners were gathered from all parts of the Confederate States east of the Mississippi, and crowded into the confined space, until, in the month of June, the average number of square feet of ground to each prisoner was only 33.2, or less than four square yards. These figures represent the condition of the stockade in a better light than it really was: for a considerable breadth of land along the stream, flowing from west to east between the hills, was low and boggy, and was covered with the excrement of the men, and thus rendered wholly uninhabitable, and, in fact, useless for every purpose except that of defecation." \*

After describing the horrible condition of the pen, Surgeon Jones proceeds as follows:

"1. The great mortality among the Federal prisoners confined in the military prison at Andersonville, was not referable to climatic causes, or to the nature of the soil and water.

"The chief causes of death were scurvy and its results, and bowel affections—chronic and acute diarrhea and dysentery. The bowel affections appear to have been due to the diet, the habits of the patients, the depressed, dejected state of the nervous system and moral and intellectual powers, and to effluvia arising from the decomposing animal and vegetable filth. The effects of salt meat, and an unvarying diet of corn meal, with but few vegetables, and imperfect supply of vinegar and syrup, were manifested in the great prevalence of scurvy. This disease, without doubt, was also influenced to an important extent, in its origin, by the foul animal emanations.

"3. From the sameness of the food, and from the action

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\* This area included some six acres, which, being deducted from the above average, leaves a little less than 64 square feet, or 7 square yards to each man previous to the enlargement, and 25.8 square feet, or 2.87 square yards, in August.



of the poisonous gases in the densely crowded and filthy stockade and hospital, the blood was altered in its constitution, even before the manifestation of actual disease. . .

“Finally, this gigantic mass of human misery calls loudly for relief, not only for the sake of suffering humanity, but also on account of our own brave soldiers now captives in the hands of the Federal government. . . .”

From the report of Surgeon Jones, supplemented by the reports of other surgeons on duty at Andersonville, the causes of the “gigantic mass of human misery” become patent. The men were not suffering for medicines. Their great want was food, raiment, shelter, water, and fuel. The last three were certainly within the power of the Confederate authorities to furnish. Had the prisoners been allowed to retain their clothing and such conveniences as long experience in military life had taught them to accumulate for comfort and convenience, there would have been but few cases of suffering from this cause.

I. The claim that the Confederate government could not furnish food to their armies, much less to prisoners of war, must be considered in the light of facts that have been disclosed since the close of the war. The fact that the armies of Hood, Johnston, and Lee were able to keep the field, to march and counter-march with great rapidity for long distances; the last, especially, to withstand the unremitting attacks of Grant in assaults by day and by night, is certainly presumptive evidence that they were well supplied with food. It is incredible that, after the army had evacuated Richmond, it could in so short a time march to Appomattox, distancing the pursuing army, where it was overtaken and held at bay by cavalry until the main army could come up; or that, on the last day of its existence, the grand Army of Northern Virginia could fight with the same energy and courage that had characterized it during the four years of the struggle, if it had been without ample supplies of food when Richmond was abandoned.

The propriety of examining this claim before allowing it is, therefore, apparent. The nature of the southern



states, those removed from the seat of war in particular, is most favorable to the production of food supplies. The cultivation of the great staple of the South was almost abandoned in consequence of the inability to deliver it in market, and the Confederate government recommended that the large servile population be employed in the production of food in its stead. There is no more prolific soil for the growth of corn, and none more abounding in favorable climatic conditions for its successful cultivation. Even before the war, the production of food in the States of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama was enormous. According to statistics obtained by the census bureau in 1860, a year before the breaking out of the war, nearly six hundred thousand cattle and swine were raised in Florida alone, and in Georgia and Alabama upward of five millions were produced in the same year. The two states last named returned for that year an aggregate of sixty million bushels of corn, thirteen million bushels of potatoes, and four million bushels of wheat. In the four counties near the Andersonville prison, there were produced nearly one million, four hundred thousand bushels of corn, thirty-three thousand bushels of wheat, three hundred thousand bushels of potatoes, and one hundred thousand bushels of beans and peas. Nearly fifty thousand bales of cotton were raised at the same time. The land was cultivated by twenty thousand slaves. It is presumable that during the war every energy was put forth to increase this supply of food.

But the evidence is not all presumptive. Mr. Ambrose Spencer, of Americus, Georgia, in his testimony upon the Wirz trial, states that there was an uncommon supply of vegetables and corn in the near vicinity of Andersonville, and that daily trains loaded with them passed Americus for Andersonville. The officers at Andersonville had purchasing agents at that point for this purpose.

In his diary, early in March, 1864, "a rebel war-clerk" writes: "It appears that there is an abundance of grain and meat in the country;" in July following: "Our crop of wheat is abundant, and the harvest is over." Governor

Watts wrote from Alabama, in April, 1864, that there were ten million pounds of bacon accessible in that state. A Mr. Hudson, of the same state, offered to deliver five hundred thousand pounds of bacon to the Confederate government, in exchange for cotton. An offer was made by responsible parties to deliver, for government use, half a million pounds of salt beef. A humane rebel officer, at Richmond, offered to Northup, rebel commissary, to furnish meat to the starving prisoners at Belle Isle without charge to the government, but his offer was refused. Charitable ladies, near Andersonville, made up baskets of provisions for the prisoners there, and sought General Winder's permission to distribute them, but were denied with abusive epithets. They afterward gave them to a train load of prisoners on their way from Millen to Savannah. Finally, at the close of the war, there were surrendered large quantities of commissary stores, consisting of bacon, corn and corn-meal, vegetables and salted beef.

General M. F. Force, of the Third Division of General Blair's corps, reported to General Blair, at Goldsboro, N. C., the amount of stores captured by his division, during the fifty-four days' march from Pocotaligo to Goldsboro, a distance of four hundred and thirty-two miles. According to this report, this single division took, from public and private sources, sixty thousand pounds of sweet potatoes; one hundred thousand pounds of corn-meal; two hundred thousand pounds of cured meat; fifteen gallons of molasses; eight barrels of sugar; fifteen barrels of salt; one barrel of coffee; and seven thousand bushels of corn. The division of General Force was the smallest of its corps, as it was also the smallest in Sherman's army. The whole army was magnificently subsisted upon the country during the entire march.

Major Wm. R. Tracy, of the commissary department, with a division of Sherman's army, testified, on the Gee trial, at Raleigh, N. C., that he was with the command at Salisbury on the 12th of April, 1865, and that they captured one hundred thousand bushels of corn, sixty thousand pounds of bacon, one hundred thousand pounds of salt, twenty

thousand pounds of sugar, twenty-seven thousand pounds of rice, fifty thousand bushels of wheat, thirty thousand pounds of corn-meal, and one hundred pounds of flour, together with barrels of whisky, boxes of wine, and a large quantity of hospital supplies; enough to supply the sick for a long time. Within the hospital, Major Tracy found a large supply of sugar, coffee, and various other hospital stores. Major-General J. H. Wilson testifies that in the country through which his command passed, immediately after the surrender of the rebel army (principally in Georgia), he found "supplies in great abundance." The Confederate commissaries and quartermasters who were located at Albany, thirty-five miles from Andersonville by rail, turned over the stores and provisions they had there. "There were thirty-one thousand pounds of bacon turned over by Captain John Davis, Confederate commissary; one hundred bags of salt; the amount of corn, I do not recollect. There was a large amount of corn and bacon in the country through which we passed.

"There is much testimony upon this particular branch of the subject, all showing the same state of facts, but which is omitted for want of space. Much of it comes from men resident in the South during the war, familiar with the capacity and products of the soil, the facilities for cultivation, and the abundance which prevailed within reach of the rebel commissaries at Andersonville and other prisons."\*

## VII.

### AGENTS OF THE REBEL GOVERNMENT.

At the head of the war department of the Confederate government was James A. Seddon, secretary of war, the personal friend Mr. Jefferson Davis. The multifarious duties devolving upon the office rendered it impossible that he should give any thing more than a general at-

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\* H. R., 217.



tention to the business of the war office, or that he should be conversant with details. Yet, as has been seen, the military prisons formed a distinct bureau of the department, for the organization and management of which he was, in a large measure, responsible. Reports of the condition of prisoners were made to him. He was in receipt of private communications representing the inhuman treatment of the captives from men high in authority, to which he paid no further attention than to file them. This is attested by the communication of Governor Vance, of North Carolina, and in the action of the municipal authorities at Danville, asking a removal of the prisons from that place on account of the danger of an epidemic from their presence. The ignorance of the rebel cabinet of the condition of our prisoners at Richmond is morally impossible. Yet we find no protest against the cruelty there practiced, nor any attempt to mitigate it. It was claimed to be a part of the "policy" of the government, with which no interference would be tolerated.

To assist the secretary of war in the discharge of his onerous duties, Robert Ould was appointed agent of exchange, in place of the humane and honorable General Huger. Up to the time of Ould's appointment, special exchanges had been made from time to time. In July, 1862, a general cartel was agreed upon between the two belligerents, with a provision that disputed interpretations of the cartel should become the subject an amicable discussion and adjustment. The knavery and trickery of Judge Ould was the direct cause of the final suspension of exchange under the cartel. With an assumption of fairness, he violated the provisions of the cartel in attempting to enforce the proclamation of Davis, relegating the custody and punishment of officers in command of colored troops to the state authorities; in attempting to overreach the United States commissioners, and to obtain, by chicanery, a constructive recognition of the Confederate government by operating through the misfortunes of prisoners in their hands. That he knew and approved of the results of his conduct of the exchange appears from many



sources. In a letter written by him to Brigadier-General Winder, March 1, 1863, from City Point, he says: "The arrangement I have made (for exchange) works largely in our favor. We get rid of a set of miserable wretches and receive some of the best material I ever saw." In an interview with General Powell, he replied to a reference to the treatment of our prisoners, "that they were treating our men so intentionally in order to force our government into an exchange of prisoners upon the basis submitted by him to General Sol. A. Meredith, then recently United States assistant commissioner of exchange."\*

Just before the battle of Chickamauga, he ordered the exchange of all the prisoners captured by General Grant and paroled at Vicksburg, without notifying the United States authorities, and in direct violation of the cartel. Throughout his whole career as commissioner of exchange, he displayed the cunning of the pettifogger, rather than the broad and sagacious views of the statesman. In a communication in reference to a demand of General Butler whether negro troops captured by the rebels were retained and sold as slaves, he said (May 2, 1864): "As yet, the Federals do not appear to have found any well-authenticated case of the retention of a negro prisoner. They have made several specific inquiries, but in every case there was no record of any such party, and I so responded. Having no especial desire to find any such case, it is more than probable the same answer will be returned to every such inquiry." When, after the interruption of the general exchange, special exchanges of officers were agreed upon, he took care to exact more than an equivalent in numbers, refusing to complete the exchange, and threatening to return to their quarters the half-starved, ragged, and wretched men taken to the exchange point for exhibition, unless his demand was complied with.

He negotiated for the supply of rations to our starving men by the Federal government, received the rations, and distributed them among the Confederate guards. The

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\* See H. R., 1106.

same was true in reference to supplies of clothing forwarded by the government, and of private boxes sent by the Christian Commission and the personal friends of the prisoners.

The following is an example of the duplicity of this man, as well as an instance of his shameless disregard of truth. On the 30th of July, 1864, a petition was drafted by the Ohio prisoners confined in Andersonville to John Brough, then governor of Ohio, setting forth their sufferings in as strong terms as their captors would permit, and in most pathetic terms urging their claim upon the government for relief. The petition was forwarded by prisoners paroled for that purpose. Previous to their parole, it passed to the War Department at Richmond for inspection, and was referred to Mr. Oulds. Upon the petition there is indorsed in the handwriting of Mr. Oulds:

“Returned to the honorable Secretary of War. I see no objection to forwarding this petition, especially as the Confederate authorities have always been ready to exchange these men.

“They and all other prisoners can now be released upon the delivery of their equivalents to us.

“*August 10, 1864.*”

On the same date, Mr. Oulds addressed the following letter to Major Mulford, assistant agent for exchange:

“SIR:—You have several times proposed to me to exchange the prisoners respectively held by the two belligerents, officer for officer, and man for man. The same offer has also been made by other officials having charge of matters connected with the exchange of prisoners. This proposal has heretofore been declined by the Confederate authorities, they insisting upon the terms of the cartel, which required the delivery of the excess on either side as on parole. In view, however, of the very large number of prisoners now held by each party, and the suffering consequent upon their continued confinement, I now con-

sent to the above proposal, and agree to deliver to you the prisoners held in captivity by the Confederate authorities, provided you agree to deliver an equal number of Confederate officers and men. As equal numbers are delivered from time to time, they will be declared exchanged.

“This proposal is made with the understanding that the officers and men on both sides who have been longest in captivity will be first delivered, when it is practicable. I shall be happy to hear from you as speedily as possible, whether this arrangement can be carried out.”

The duplicity here disclosed is characteristic of the diplomacy of the rebel agent. For more than eight months negotiations for exchange had been interrupted, and this was the first notice our government had of a willingness on his part to enter upon a general exchange. At the time this letter was written, Mr. Lincoln had been renominated for the presidency of the United States. The rebels believed his defeat would be the harbinger of independence for them. Every effort that they could well make to assist in the election of his opponent they were willing to make. To this end it was proposed to liberate such of the prisoners as were unfavorable to Mr. Lincoln's re-election, and send them north to vote and labor for his defeat. There is no doubt that if such a scheme could have been put into practicable shape, and it could have been made to appear that their terrible sufferings were caused by Mr. Lincoln's refusal to interfere in their behalf, a sufficiently strong sympathy might have been created in favor of General McClellan to carry him into the presidential chair. There is an open presumption that some such plan as this awakened the unfamiliar spirit of sympathy manifested by Mr. Ould on this tenth day of August.

To assist the rebel agent of exchange, the President of the Confederate States appointed his own warm personal friend and partisan, Brigadier John H. Winder. This man acquired in the field of his operations a fame as

unenviable as the celebrated Haynau, the inhuman butcher of the unfortunate patriots of Hungary. To him and his subordinates was committed the execution of the "policy" made possible by Mr. Ould. His first field of operations was among the prisoners of Richmond, where his achievements became matter of such notoriety as to draw upon him the execrations of the unfortunates in his immediate power, as well as the maledictions of the citizens of Richmond. In conjunction with the Turners and one Ross, he robbed, starved, buried in dens of filth, and killed the Union prisoners, without hindrance and without remorse. Prisoners froze and rotted before his eyes at Belle Isle, at Salisbury, at Florence, and at Andersonville. In the superlative blackness of his dark career, there is no evidence that a single ray of pity or of mercy ever illuminated his path. And when he saw the helpless and tortured victims slipping from his grasp, he died. To such a height of unparalled infamy had he attained when he was ordered from Richmond, the public press exclaimed: "*Thank God that Richmond is at last rid of old Winder!*" God have mercy upon those to whom he has been sent!" His destination was Andersonville.

The Andersonville pen was laid out by W. S. Winder, a son of General John H. Winder, in the early part of December, 1863. The object in view in its erection is told in the words of Mr. Ambrose Spencer, a resident of Americus, Georgia: "Between the 1st and 15th of December, I went up to Andersonville with him (W. S. Winder) and four or five other gentlemen, out of curiosity to see how the prison was to be laid out. When we arrived there the limits of the prison had all been marked. They were then digging a trench to put the stockade posts in. Workmen were cutting down trees in and around where the stockade was. In the course of conversation I inquired of W. S. Winder if it was proposed to erect barracks or shelter of any kind inside the stockade. . . . I asked him if he was going to erect barracks of any kind. He replied that he was not; that the damned Yankees who would be put in there would have no need of them.



I asked him why he was cutting down all the trees, and suggested that they would prove a shelter to the prisoners from the heat of the sun at least. He made this reply, or something similar to it: 'That is just what I am going to do; I am going to build a pen here that will kill more damned Yankees than can be destroyed in the front.' Those are very nearly his words, or equivalent to them. . . . I had frequent conversations with General Winder. . . . The opinion I had formed of him was any thing but creditable to his feeling, his humanity, or his gentlemanly bearing. I am not aware that I ever had a conversation with General Winder in which he did not curse more or less, especially if the subject of Andersonville was brought up. I considered him a brutal man. That I drew from his conversation and conduct as I observed them. I looked upon him as a man utterly devoid of all kindly feeling and sentiment." \*

Mr. Q. O. Stevens, in a letter to Mr. Davis, dated Columbia, S. C., January 1, 1864, says: "He (Winder) is universally disliked, and by many *detested*. Coming from a state that has no sympathy with us, it is thought strange that he should be put in a position where he can exert his influence for so much evil. His sympathies are wholly with Marylanders. He grants them favors denied to our own people—allows them to cross the lines at pleasure. In addition, he is charged with habitual drunkenness, accepting bribes for passports, and permission to bring liquor into the city. He has greatly prejudiced our people by his profanity and abuse of all to whom, by bribery or for any other causes, he is not made partial. The people are weary of *such* a man in so prominent a position. . . ." †

In his report to Colonel R. H. Chilton, A. A. and I. G. C. S. A., respecting the condition of Andersonville, in August, 1864, Colonel D. T. Chandler, A. A. and I. G., holds the following language: "My duty requires me respectfully to recommend a change in the officer in com-

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\* H. R., 83.

† H. R., 725.

mand of the post, Brigadier-General J. H. Winder, and the substitution in his place of some one who unites both energy and good judgment with some feeling of humanity and consideration for the welfare and comfort (so far as is consistent with their safe keeping) of the vast number of unfortunates placed under his control; some one who, at least, will not advocate deliberately and in cold blood the propriety of leaving them in their present condition until their number has been sufficiently reduced by death to make the present arrangement suffice for their accommodation; who will not consider it a matter of self-laudation, and boasting that he has never been inside the stockade, a place the horrors of which it is difficult to describe, and which is a disgrace to civilization; the condition of which he might, by the exercise of a little energy and judgment, even with the limited means at his command, have considerably improved." \*

In referring to the criticism of this report by General Winder, Colonel Chilton, after referring to the charge of Winder that Chandler's report was false, says: "In view of these considerations (contained in the file) and Colonel Chandler's request (for an investigation), it is respectfully recommended that such action may be ordered as will relieve Colonel Chandler from the imputation of falsehood, and rebuke an officer who seems to be as careless and indifferent respecting the honor of another's reputation as he is reported to be to the dictates of humanity." †

In a volume published by Mr. Warren Lee Goss, entitled "The Soldier's Story of his Captivity at Andersonville, Belle Island, and Other Rebel Prisons," is the following notice of General Winder: "He was a man apparently about sixty years of age, dressed in homespun secesh citizen clothes, butternut coat and gray pants, tall, spare, and straight in figure, with an austere expression of face, firm set mouth, a large Roman nose, like a parrot's beak, and a cold, stony, stern eye. I overheard a conversation, which took place on the morning of his arrival,

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\* H. R., 129.

† H. R., 604.

between him and Colonel Iverson, who stood just under the cabin window near where I was writing. Said Winder, in sharp, abrupt terms, 'Colonel Iverson, I can't have all these Yankees running around outside the prison (Florence). What are they doing?' The colonel explained that it was necessary in order to provide the prison with wood, and to erect shelter for the sick. 'No necessity,' said Winder, abruptly, to which Iverson responded in a tone of remonstrance and entreaty. 'General, the prisoners, in spite of all I have done or can do, are starving.' 'Let them starve, then!' said Winder, in sharp, angry tones, putting a stop to further conversation."\*

To assist General Winder in the discharge of his duties at the various prison posts over which he had command, three men are particularly distinguished for their brutality. They are Wirz, at Andersonville; Gee, at Salisbury; and Barrett, at Florence. These men well earned the ignominy they have attained in the opinion of their fellow-men. It was they who had charge of the prison interior, who invented tortures for the men and inflicted them. To them was assigned the execution of the details of the horrible business outlined by young Winder when he planned the pen—to kill more Yankees than the bullets at the front. They were selected by Winder for the fell purpose; they were shielded by him from the punishment they so justly merited at the hands of the better-disposed of the Confederate officers. Among the fabled Harpies, three were distinguished for their frantic enmity to the human race. A like distinction attaches to these three men.

The character of Wirz was fully exposed upon his trial, and he paid a trifling penalty for his crimes upon the scaffold. Gee escaped by a legal fiction. Barrett is said to be still living. The evidence of unnecessary cruelty on the part of each is overwhelming. The shooting of sick men, the brutal beating of starving wretches, the cursing of feeble men rendered idiotic or insane by hunger and

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\* H. R., 195.

disease, are crimes of which each was guilty. "Get out of my way, you G——d d——n Yankee s—— o—— a b——," exclaimed Captain Wirz to a Federal prisoner. "I can not see you, Captain; I am blind," was the plaintive response. "I will learn you to see me," replied the valiant officer; and he smote him upon the head with the heavy butt of his pistol. To a remark of a new prisoner, while the squad was being counted, "that it looked pretty crowded in there [meaning the Andersonville pen]; we can't very well stand it," Wirz responded, "Well, it's a d——l good place to die." At another time, he said: "You think we haint got bread enough to keep you on. Damn your souls, we have corn bread enough to keep you for twenty years."\* Hundreds of similar expressions are on record against this man.

But cruelty did not exhaust itself in words. The infliction of atrocious punishments for slight offenses forms a large factor in the charges against the officers in charge of the rebel prisons, wherever they were located. Prison discipline was sought to be maintained by starvation in the first instance; by unmerciful beatings, by the stocks, by the ball and chain, when courage and energy could not be subdued by famine. Perhaps the smallness and the weakness of the prison guard rendered their captivity insecure, and their treatment was in part in consequence of this. There is no doubt that, had the men at Andersonville been full fed, the neglect to provide them with such necessities as civilized soldiers are accustomed to surround themselves with might have impelled them to burst their bonds and strike for liberty. The promptness with which the sentinels fired upon the unfortunate soldier who approached the dead line betrays the weakness of the guard, and the constant apprehension of an outbreak. The punishment of those who succeeded in escaping from the stockades, but were captured and returned, was a part of the policy of the Richmond authorities. The hunting with dogs finds parallel only in the cruelties of the palmy days of slavery.

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\* H. R., 822.



The punishments described in the preceding narratives are all fully corroborated by the statements of prisoners at every point. The duty of the soldier to regain his freedom, if possible, seemed to be forgotten. According to the customs and usages of war, the attempt to escape is not considered a crime. Even hardened criminals, condemned and confined for the highest infraction of the law, are not punished for breaking jail. While every precaution is taken to recapture them, no cruel punishments are inflicted upon them. From the confinement of Colonel Streight in the dark and filthy dungeon of Libby for an honorable attempt to regain his liberty, to the punishment in the terrible chain gang of Wirz, there is the same policy pursued—the same determination to ignore the rights of honorable combatants.

For attempts to escape by tunneling, the same theory of punishment prevailed. But the punishment was not confined to the participants in the "crime." The innocent and the guilty were alike implicated in the barbarous discipline. The prison keepers made short work of the matter when they imagined a tunnel to be in progress. They stopped the rations of the whole camp until the "fraud" was disclosed, thus making the prisoners themselves the spies upon their comrades. It is to the credit of the men that no instances are known of a revelation by a prisoner, except he were himself engaged in the work. It is highly probable that the rebel authorities employed detectives of their army for this purpose, a proceeding to which no objection can be urged. It is only when the prisoners were punished as criminals for exercising their right to escape, that the prison authorities become obnoxious to the charge of barbarity in this respect.

## VIII.

## RESULTS OF IMPRISONMENT.

The complete result of the treatment of Union prisoners summarized above will never be known. The physical wrecks of men released by exchange and by the sudden collapse of the insurgent government became absorbed into the great mass of the people, and all public trace of them is lost. Their fate is known only to personal friends. The statistics captured among the papers of the war office at Richmond are wholly unreliable. Whether the rebel authorities purposely falsified their reports to deceive the United States government, or whether they were lacking in a genius for details, or were too careless and indifferent to the facts to keep full and exact records, is matter of mere conjecture. The death record at Andersonville, and the number of the grave in which each man was buried, was made by Mr. Dorrence Atwater, a Federal prisoner, and secretly brought away by him on his return to Washington. This record covers the time from the opening of the stockade, February 27, 1864, to February 2, 1865. On the 15th of June, 1864, Mr. Atwater was taken out of the stockade to act as clerk at the headquarters of surgeon J. H. White, in charge of the hospitals at Andersonville. He was placed in charge of the death register. Mr. Atwater succeeded in preserving a copy of his own register, from the time he was installed as clerk to the date above mentioned, when he was removed to Florence. While in the office he made a copy of the register as it had been kept previous to his taking charge of it. It is the only authentic copy extant. This record shows that from the 27th of February, 1864, to the 1st day of February, 1865, twelve thousand six hundred and thirty-one men died and were buried; the names of such of whom as were known were entered in this record. J. H. Swarner, a private in Company II, Second New

York Cavalry, led the van in this terrible army of death. He occupies grave No. 1, in the National Cemetery at Andersonville. He was carried to the pen from Belle Isle with the detachment which inaugurated it. He died on the day of his arrival.

The records in the War Department at Washington show an aggregate of 26,328 deaths of prisoners of war in rebel hands during the entire Rebellion. Of this number 111 were officers, 160 were citizens, and 79 colored; 2,289 died of wounds, 13,009 of disease and other known causes, 11,030 of unknown causes. At Andersonville, during a period of somewhat less than a year, 13,412 died, 5,890 of unknown causes; at Florence, during something over three months, 2,793, all of unknown causes; at Salisbury, in five months, 4,728, 2,242 of unknown causes; at Richmond, 3,450, 19 of unknown causes. At Andersonville, 1,767 wounded men died; at Salisbury, 46; at Richmond, 287. The inaccuracy of these reports is not a matter of question. The whole number of graves of Union prisoners is known by actual count to be 36,401, making a discrepancy of more than 38½ per cent between the reported and the buried dead. Besides this difference between the reported and the known mortality of the prisoners, there were hundreds of prisoners of whom there is no trace. At Camp Tyler, Texas, prisoners agree in the estimate of more than 700 dead; the war report shows but 2, and the number of graves, 286. At Richmond the report shows 3,140, the graves, 3,450; while in a single hospital, No. 21, to which 2,700 prisoners were admitted, in three months, 1,450 deaths occurred. At Andersonville, after the war, numerous skeletons were found in the burrows which the prisoners had made for shelter. All along the railways men were buried who died during transportation. At Fort Pillow 500 were shot to death after the garrison had surrendered, and more than 100 unarmed citizens, who had taken refuge in the fort, were forced into the river and drowned. From a report of Surgeon T. G. Richardson, dated Richmond, March 14, 1864, to General Braxton Bragg, it appears that on the 11th of March, 1864, there

were in the prisoners' hospital at Richmond 1,127 sick and wounded men; of the number confined there from January 1st to March 11, 1864, there had died an average of 10 per day; during the month of February an average of 18 per day; during the eleven days of March covered by the report an average of 22 per day. This gives a mortality of 310 for January, 522 for February, and 244 for the first eleven days of March; a total of 1,076 for seventy-one days. If the mortality for the remaining days of March continued at the same ratio, it would bring an increase of 440, making a total for March of 684, and a grand total for the three months of 1,516, or nearly one-half of all the deaths reported at Richmond during the entire war.

At Belle Isle there were, during the winter of 1863-4, about ten thousand prisoners, and the confined quarters, the short rations, scanty clothing, and lack of fuel caused a ratio of mortality not less than that at Andersonville during the early part of their confinement at the latter place. In the absence of reports of Belle Isle, it is fair to follow the prisoners to Andersonville, whither the larger part were transported, and to approximate as nearly as possible to the true number by a comparison with the deaths at that point during the months of March and April, 1864. Taking the mean strength of prisoners at Belle Isle during the months of November and December, 1863, and January and February, 1864, at 9,000 men, and the ratio of deaths to mean strength at 4.76 (the ratio at Andersonville during the two months named, as shown by Surgeon Jones's report), there was a total mortality at Belle Isle of 1,714 men. These, added to the number that died in hospital during January, February, and March, show a total of 3,220 deaths in Richmond during four months, against a reported total of 3,440 for the entire war. It is probable that not more than one in two of all the Federal deaths in and about Richmond caused by their treatment, or lack of treatment, is truthfully reported in the records.

The whole number of deaths at Salisbury, as shown by



the records, is 4,728; as shown by the number of graves actually counted, is 12,112. The record of the book is a little less than 39 per cent of the record of the cemetery. It is known that, both at Salisbury and Florence, the dead were buried sometimes two, and even four, in one grave. The number of the graves is therefore too small. The prison at Salisbury was in operation for five months; that at Florence, four months.

There is one other phase of the treatment of prisoners of war still to be mentioned. There were repeated orders to commanders in the field to make no capture of colored soldiers. These orders were obeyed in the first instance; but the president of the Confederacy afterward modified them by directing that they should be returned to their masters, or, failing to be reclaimed, that they should be sold as property of the Confederacy. There is a noticeably small number of colored prisoners upon the records of the captured rebel archives. Of the 178,895 colored troops enlisted in the United States service during the War of the Rebellion, 737 are reported as captured by the rebels, exclusive of officers, 78 of whom died in the hands of their captors. This is about  $10\frac{3}{5}$  per cent, a ratio of mortality about one-half that of the white prisoners. The whole number of white enlisted men was 2,073,112, of whom 178,354 were captured. The captured from the white troops numbered 86 in every 1,000 men; from the colored troops,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in every 1,000 men. The colored troops, however, did not serve during the entire war, but became a part of the army after January 1, 1863. Making the very liberal allowance of one-half of the number per thousand, as the ratio for the last two years, during which time colored men were in the service, it is found that about ten times as many white as colored troops were made prisoners. The cause of this is to be found in the determination to make no colored prisoners. Had there been the same ratio of captures among the colored troops as among the whites, reckoned upon the above basis, the whole number should have been 7,654. As seen above, 737 are admitted to have been captured, leaving 6,917 un-

accounted for, except upon the theory that the orders above alluded to were executed.

Enough has been said to show the utter unreliability of the captured statistical records published by the war department in reference to prisoners of war. At best, they afford only a basis of calculation, and this is entirely unsatisfactory in a case where, for the credit of both parties, exact information should be obtainable. For the above reasons, and others, the war department estimates that 20 per cent should be added to the number of graves as shown by actual count. This gives 42,249 who died in rebel hands. To these add 6,917 unaccounted for among the colored troops, and the total becomes 49,166: an army larger than that with which Napoleon conquered the Austrians and made Italy free.

Besides the buried dead, there is still left the living dead, who were sent from their prison pen to their northern homes; many of whom, indeed, died upon the way, but many survived to pass a few months and, perhaps, years of pain and physical wreck, objects of sympathy and commiseration to friends, but forever incapacitated for usefulness.

Dr. William Balser, a surgeon of the army, who was stationed at Jacksonville, Florida, testifies: "There arrived at Jacksonville, Florida, on the first of May, 3,250 prisoners from Andersonville. They were in a most horrible condition; nearly naked. If they did have any thing on, it was only rags. They were covered with filth and lice. They had sores all over them, and a great many of them were living skeletons. The most prominent disease among them was scurvy and diarrhea. . . . A great number of the prisoners had their arms and legs swelled up three or four times their natural size, and actually black with extravasated blood. They had ulcers three or four inches in diameter on their arms and calves of their legs. Some of them, from the effects of scurvy, had necrosis of the jaws, so that I was obliged to pull out pieces of bone nearly an inch long. Some of them had lost the eye from ulceration of the anterior portion of the cornea. Some

of them were totally blind, no doubt from extravasation of blood as well as from fluid in the posterior parts of the eye. A good many were idiotic and demented from softness of the brain, resulting, no doubt, from long suffering. Bad nourishment and exposure to the weather would cause that. . . . I do not believe that one-half of them will ever again be fit for their former occupations." \*

It is unnecessary to add the reports of other surgeons stationed at the various points where these physical wrecks were received. They all repeat the same tale. From the best data that can be obtained, it is estimated that at least 10,000 men, who survived the horrors of the prison pen, perished after their release, or were permanently disabled. The grand total swells to nearly 60,000 unoffending, unarmed prisoners of war, destroyed by the policy of gradual starvation and exposure, not a tithe of whom, with ordinary care and humane treatment, such as was within the power of their captors to afford, would have perished.

It has been charged, and it is believed by apologists of the rebel government, that the treatment of Federal prisoners was in retaliation for inhumanities practiced against Confederate prisoners in Federal hands. The following summary is copied from the "House Report, 45," so often referred to in the foregoing sketch :

"As the statement of the war department consolidates the Federal prisoners paroled and exchanged, the committee are unable to determine from this source what proportion of captives was actually confined in rebel prisons. But the Federal authorities paroled 10,514 in excess of one half of their captives. Let us then take this proportion of one-half as the basis of our calculation, assuming (although it gives undue advantage to the rebels) that the rebels paroled one-half of their prisoners. This would leave us the following result:

Total number of captures by rebels.....	188,145
Number paroled, estimated at one-half.....	94,072
Number actually confined in prison.....	94,072

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\* H. R., 245.

Number deaths in Confederate prisons ascertained by graves .....	36,401
Per cent of mortality in rebel prisons.....	38.7
Per cent of entire rebel captures.....	19.35

“Let us compare this with the mortality of rebel soldiers captured by the Federal armies :

Total number of captures by Federals.....	476,169
Paroled.....	<u>248,599</u>
Number actually confined in prison or left as prisoners of war in our hands.....	227,570
Mortality of Confederate prisoners, as ascertained by graves .....	30,152
Per cent of mortality in Federal prisons.....	13.25
Difference, per cent, in favor of Union authorities. . .	25.45
Per cent mortality of entire Union captures.....	6.33
Difference, per cent, in favor Union authorities.....	13.02

“If the mortality of rebel prisoners captured by the Union forces had equaled that of Union soldiers captured by them, taking the whole number of captures as a basis of calculation, the deaths among the 476,169 Confederates in our hands would have been 92,000 instead of 30,152. Or, calculating it upon the reduced basis of the prisoners retained in custody on both sides, to wit, 227,570 Confederate prisoners in our hands to 94,072 prisoners in their hands, the mortality would have been 88,000 instead of 30,152. Instead of this, the mortality is reversed, and out of 94,072 prisoners in confinement by the rebels, 36,401 died, while, out of 227,570 in the hands of the Federals, only 30,152 died. In other words, nearly two out of every five, or forty out of each hundred died in their hands, while ‘one in seventeen, or six of each one hundred, died in ours.’” \*

It is charged by a southern writer, J. W. Jones, that the treatment of Federal prisoners “resulted from causes beyond the control of our authorities—from epidemics, etc., which might have been avoided or greatly mitigated had not the Federal government—first, declared medicines

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\* H. R., 228.



‘contraband of war;’ second, refused the proposition of Judge Ould that each government should send its own surgeons, with medicines, hospital stores, etc., to minister to soldiers in prison; third, declined his proposition to send medicines to its own men in southern prisons, without being required to allow the Confederates the same privilege; fourth, refused to allow the Confederate government to buy medicines for gold, tobacco, or cotton, which it offered to pledge its honor should be used only for Federal prisoners in its hands; fifth, refused to exchange sick and wounded; sixth, and neglected, from August to December, 1864, to accede to Judge Ould’s proposition to send transportation to Savannah, and receive, without equivalent, from ten to fifteen thousand Federal prisoners, notwithstanding the fact that this offer was accompanied with a statement of the utter inability of the Confederacy to provide for these prisoners, and a detailed report of the monthly mortality at Andersonville, and that Judge Ould again and again urged compliance with his humane proposal.”

It is not worth while to traverse these charges in detail—indeed, the indefiniteness of the statement that the treatment of the prisoners resulted from “epidemics, etc.,” prohibits that. There are on file in the office of the War Department, at Washington, many captured reports of surgeons in charge of the prisons at various points, in not one of which is there any allusion to the prevalence of epidemics among the prisoners. Surgeon Isaiah H. White, surgeon in charge of the post at Andersonville, says: “Amongst the old prisoners, scurvy prevails to a great extent, which is usually accompanied by diseases of the digestive organs. This, in connection with the mental depression produced by long imprisonment, is the chief cause of mortality. There is nothing in the topography of the country that can be said to influence the health of the prison.

. . . . .

“The densely crowded condition of the prisoners, with the innumerable little shelters irregularly arranged, pre-

cludes the enforcement of proper police, and prevents free circulation of air."\*

The report is dated August 8, 1864.

Surgeon E. J. Eldridge, under date of May 6, 1864, reports to Major Lamar Cobb: "I found the prisoners, in my opinion, too much crowded for the promotion or even continuance of their present health, particularly during the approaching summer months. The construction of properly arranged barracks would, of course, allow the same number of men to occupy the inclosure with material advantage to their comfort and health. At present, their shelters consist of such as they can make of the boughs of trees, poles, etc., covered with dirt. . . . I found the condition of a large number of the Belle Island prisoners, on their arrival, to be such as to require more attention to their diet and cleanliness than to the actual administration of medicines, very many of them suffering from chronic diarrhea, combined with scorbutic disposition, with extreme emaciation as the consequence."†

A. A. S. F. S. Hopkins reports to General Winder, August 1, 1864, concerning Andersonville, among other things:

"CAUSES OF DISEASE AND MORTALITY.

- "1. The large number of prisoners crowded together.
- "2. The entire absence of all vegetables as diet, so necessary as a preventive of scurvy.
- "3. The want of barracks to shelter the prisoners from sun and rain.
- "4. The inadequate supply of wood and good water.
- "5. Badly cooked food.
- "6. The filthy condition of prisoners and prison generally.
- "7. The morbidic emanations from the branch or ravine passing through the prison, the condition of which can not be better explained than by naming it a morass of human excrement and mud.

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\* H. R., 135.

† H. R., 123.

“PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

“1. The removal immediately from the prison of not less than fifteen thousand prisoners.

“2. Detail on parole a sufficient number of prisoners to cultivate the necessary supply of vegetables, and, until this can be carried into practical operation, the appointment of agents along the different lines of railroad to purchase and forward a supply.

“3. The immediate erection of barracks to shelter the prisoners.

“4. To furnish the necessary quantity of wood, and have wells dug to supply the deficiency of water.

“5. Divide the prisoners into squads, place each squad under the charge of a sergeant, furnish the necessary quantity of soap, and hold these sergeants responsible for the personal cleanliness of his squad; furnish the prisoners with clothing at the expense of the Confederate government, and if that government be unable to do so, candidly admit our inability, and call upon the Federal government to furnish them.

“6. By a daily inspection of bake-house and baking.

“7. Cover over with sand from the hill sides the entire ‘morass’ not less than six inches deep, board the stream or water-course, and confine the men to the use of the sinks, and make the penalty for disobedience of such orders *severe*.

“FOR THE HOSPITAL

“We recommend

“1. The tents be floored with planks; if planks can not be had, with puncheons; and if this be impossible, then with pine straw, to be frequently changed.

“2. We find an inadequate supply of stool-boxes, and recommend that the number be increased, and that the nurses be required to remove them as soon as used, and

before returning them see that they are well washed and limed.

"3. The diet for the sick is not such as they should have, and we recommend that they be supplied with the necessary quantity of beef soup and vegetables.

"4. We also recommend that the surgeons be required to visit the hospitals not less than twice a day.

"5. We can not too strongly recommend the necessity for the appointment of an efficient medical officer to the exclusive duty of inspecting daily the prison hospital and bakery, requiring of him daily reports of their condition to head-quarters." \*

This report of Dr. Hopkins was suppressed by General Winder and another substituted. On the 14th of August, 1864, he was ordered by General Winder from Andersonville to Millen.

Surgeon Joseph Jones, from whose very able report extracts have been taken above, enumerates 123 varieties of disease reported at the Andersonville hospital from March 1, 1864, to August 31, 1864. Of these, intermittent typhoid fever and varioloid are the only ones that are considered epidemic in character. Out of 42,686 reported cases of diseases of all kinds, 472 were typhoid, with 185 deaths; 62 were varioloid, with 39 deaths. But there were 9,501 cases of scorbutus, with 999 deaths. The total number of deaths was 7,712.

Reports from other points make either no mention of epidemic diseases, or of few cases. The diet of the prisoners prevented the spread of small-pox; there were a few cases of yellow fever at Charleston. Any candid inquirer can satisfy himself that the attempt to fasten the great mortality of Federal prisoners upon the prevalence of epidemic is absurd, to use no harsher term.

What Mr. Jones means by "etc." is unknown. No one can bring evidence to rebut the charge of "etc." It is an expression used to conceal defects in loose statements,

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\* H. R., 91-2.



and, by its enigmatical character, to furnish cover for retreat when the writer is hard pressed.

It being evident that "the treatment of Federal prisoners" did not "result from epidemics," the attempt to fasten the responsibility for it upon the United States government, in declaring medicines "contraband of war," falls to the ground. Besides, the lack of medicines for Andersonville is not to be attributed to this cause. Upon the report of Surgeon White, given above, is the following indorsement:

"Surgeon White was authorized some time since to send his requisition for supplies direct to the medical purveyors. Not having supplies is his own fault. He should have anticipated the wants of the sick by timely requisitions. . . .

S. D. MOORE,  
"Surgeon-General."\*

In reply to the second cause assigned by Mr. Jones, it is sufficient, perhaps, to mention what is well known, that it was not physicians, medicines, or hospital stores that were wanted; but pure air, room for proper exercise, a sufficient supply of water and soap, shelter from rain and sun, fuel for warmth and cooking, and wholesome vegetable and animal food—which, from its perishable nature, could not be furnished by the United States government—that was needed.

There is nothing of record to show that a proposition, the declining of which is said to be the third cause, was made by Mr. Ould, or by any one having authority to make it.

The fourth cause has this foundation in fact: Brigadier General Gid. J. Pillow, Commissary-General of Prisoners C. S. A., addressed to the United States Commissary-General of Prisoners a letter, bearing date, Macon, March 26, 1865, in which this proposition is made:

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\* H. R., 135.

“*Third.* That the Confederate Commissary-General of Prisoners be allowed, if necessary, to ship cotton to the markets of the United States, or other foreign markets, to purchase for Federal prisoners in our hands subsistence, clothing, blankets, shoes, hats, hospital and medical stores, in quantities sufficient for Federal prisoners; and to provide in advance, to be kept in prison depots, such supplies for ten thousand prisoners. . . .

“*Fourth.* The Confederate government stipulates that, through its Commissary-General of Prisoners, it will apply all the supplies purchased to their wants, and to no other use.”\*

Seven days after this proposition was written, Grant broke through the lines of General Lee. On the day following, Richmond was occupied by the Federal troops, and the Confederate government was in full flight from its capital. The contest was practically ended by the surrender of Lee at Appomattox on the 9th of April following. It is not probable that the United States government acted upon the humane proposition of General Pillow.

The fifth cause assigned by Mr. Jones is that the Federal government refused to exchange sick and wounded. The following letter is a sufficient reply :

“HEAD-QUARTERS DEP'T OF VIRGINIA AND NORTH CAROLINA.

“*In the Field, September 9, 1864.*

“SIR:—I propose that the belligerent parties, waiving all other questions, shall, from time to time, exchange all sick and invalid officers and men who, from wounds or sickness, shall, in the judgment of the party holding them, be unfit for duty, and likely to remain so for sixty days.

“I make this proposition, in order to alleviate the sufferings of those unable to bear the confinement incident to a prisoner of war, and whose condition might be benefited by the comforts of home, and medical treatment by their friends.

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\* H. R., 715.

"I trust and believe that this measure of obvious humanity will meet your agreement, as I am satisfied no advantage can accrue to either party by retaining such men in confinement. As a further evidence of the strong desire on the part of this government to expose their soldiers to as little hardship as possible, consistently with such action as they feel called upon to take to observe their good faith, pledged alike to all soldiers, although it will involve the government in a very considerable expense; yet, to save the sick and suffering a long and tedious transportation by rail, I will receive such invalid officers and soldiers of the United States as may be confined in the states of North and South Carolina and Georgia at Fort Pulaski, near Savannah, and will transport thither any such invalids of the Confederate forces as may be in our possession, who can be more easily carried thither. Other invalid prisoners in the western department I will deliver at such ports on the Mississippi river as may hereafter be agreed upon; the invalid soldiers of the United States to be received in exchange therefor who are convenient to these points. Full rolls of the invalids so exchanged to be kept, so that the equivalents may be adjusted hereafter.

"Asking as early as possible attention to this proposition, I have the honor to be your obedient servant, etc.,

"BENJ. F. BUTLER,

*"Major-General and Commissioner for Exchange.*

"HON. ROBERT OULD." \*

To this proposal of General Butler, Judge Ould acceded, and arrangements were immediately made to carry it into effect. Late in the fall of 1864, a large number of prisoners, who "would be unfit for duty in sixty days," were exchanged.

On the report of permanently disabled Federal prisoners by the Confederate surgeons, Tucker, Spence, and

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\* H. R., 693.

Armiss, there is the following indorsement in Ould's handwriting:

"Returned to honorable secretary of war. I expect to send the disabled officers and men by next flag of truce. I am satisfied that an agreement to release unconditionally all disabled men would result to our disadvantage, simply because the enemy would not carry it out in good faith. . . . There has existed, for some time, some such understanding. To unconditionally release the Federal disabled, would be to surrender the advantage of charging them in account.\*

"Jan. 20, 1865."

This certainly does not savor of any offer to surrender ten or fifteen thousand without equivalent between August and December, 1865.

Among the captured rebel archives is a letter from General Howell Cobb, in command of the Georgia Reserves, to Hon. James A. Seddon. It is dated Macon, Georgia, September 9, 1864; it contains the following proposition: "To find out all the prisoners (*who are privates*) who are opposed to Lincoln, and to parole and send them home; at the same time, addressing a communication through Ould to their commissioner of exchange, saying that, as they had attempted to deceive their people with a statement that we would not agree to a fair exchange, we send these prisoners home on parole, as a *practical evidence* of our wishes and views about an exchange."

On this letter is indorsed the following:

"To Colonel Ould, for his consideration and remarks, 13th September, 1864.—J. A. S."

"September 14, 1864.

"Respectfully returned to the Honorable Secretary of War. My view of the matter is, that we had better send

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\* H. R., 604.



off disabled men and those whose term of service has expired, to the extent of the unexchanged Vicksburg men; I doubt the policy of going further. . . .

“ROBERT OULD,

“*Agent of Exchange.*”

The “humane proposition” of General Cobb was solely to influence the political canvass of 1864 in the North. Colonel Ould was willing to adopt the plan, to balance the unexchanged Confederates paroled by General Grant at Vicksburg, who had been *declared exchanged* by Ould nearly a year before, and had participated in the battle of Chickamauga. There is no evidence on record that Judge Ould ever made the proposition, as alleged, to the United States government.

The attempt to fasten the atrocious treatment of prisoners of war upon any cause other than the merciless inhumanity of the Confederate government will prove abortive. The clique of ambitious statesmen, who organized and conducted the rebellion, is responsible for the terrible sufferings that befel the unhappy captives.

As has been asserted by the writers of the foregoing narratives, and often confirmed by the statements of returned soldiers, the rank and file of the Confederate army were humane men, and accorded to the Federal prisoner as kind and courteous treatment as the exigencies of war permit. The guards of the various prisons, even at Andersonville, have never been implicated in the atrocities inflicted upon the captives. One instance of remonstrance is on record, made by a private soldier, in a confidential letter to President Davis, against the unnecessary killing of the prisoners, and the testimony of others confirms the statement. Brave men are not unmerciful to a fallen foe, nor when the strife of battle is ended, do they cherish animosity against those who joined with them in deadly conflict.

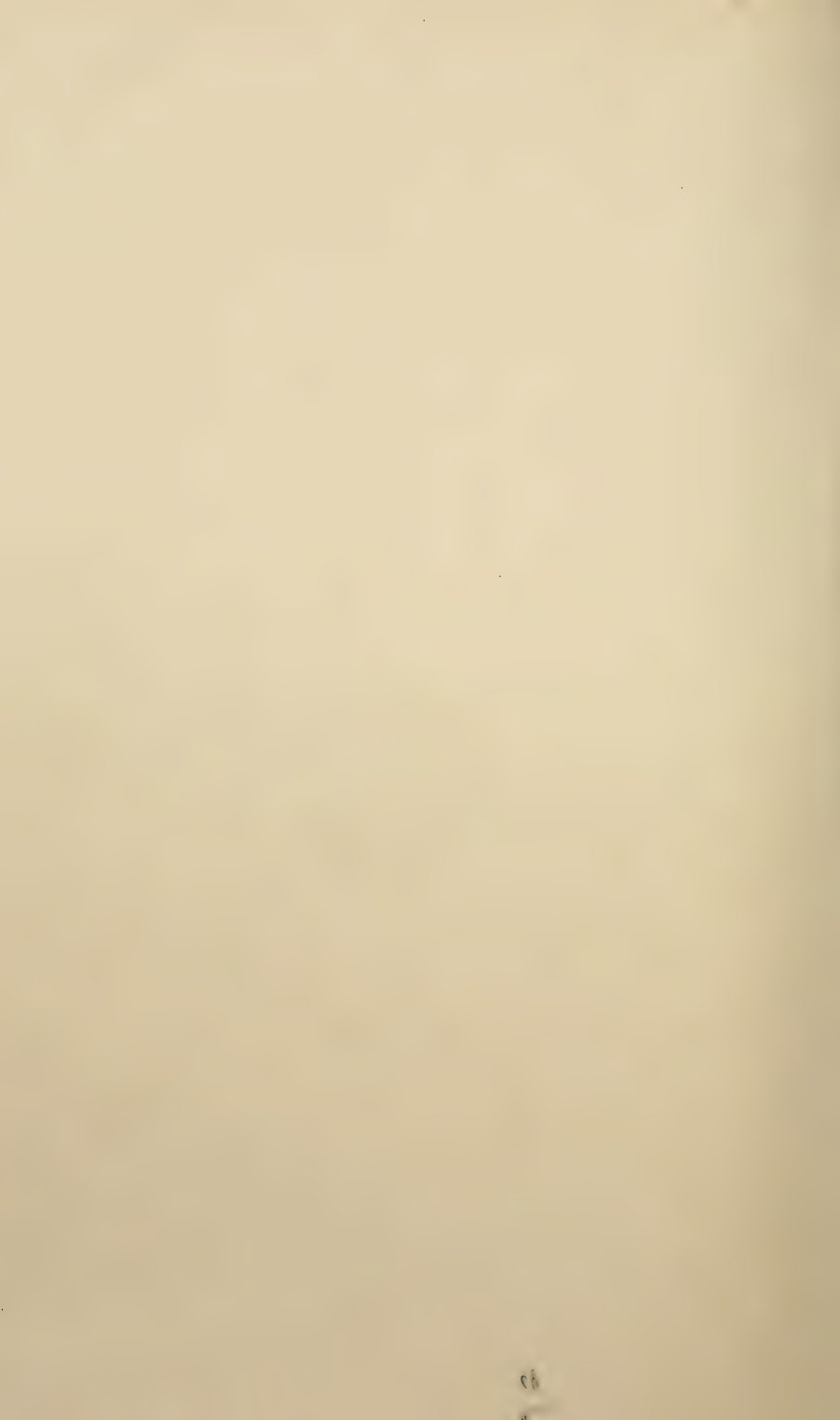
Nor is there any evidence that the general public of the South either knew or approved of the treatment of the

captive Federals. Bitter feeling undoubtedly and naturally existed against the invaders of their soil, the destroyers of their homes and property, yet every intelligent non-combatant at the South recognized these as legitimate concomitants of war, and bore no personal hatred against the soldiers of their enemy as individuals. The exceptions to this general feeling were such as are to be found in every community. Brutal men exist in every nation, no less at the North than at the South. The southern people as a whole are a generous and kindly race. It was their misfortune to find themselves in the hands of a pitiless cabal of self constituted leaders, whose unbridled passions produced the terrible results herein narrated, and which they were powerless to prevent, even if they were cognizant of their existence.

The southern press and southern orators have always laid stress upon the chivalrous character of their people. History places some of the greatest crimes of which the human family have been the victims at the door of the world's chivalry. The cavaliers of England are notorious for their inhumanity. Justice and mercy to their inferiors in the accident of rank were little known and little considered by them. The chivalry of England subjected the unfortunate patriots who fell into its hands in our revolutionary struggle to the horrible barbarities of Dartmoor, and the wail of the victims of their merciless fury go up from the highlands of Scotland and the scorching plains of India. The crimes against the Federal prisoner in the deadly pens of the South, during the war for unity of our country, add another chapter to the barbarous annals of chivalry.

In pencilling the death throes of slavery, the American Doré shall picture a writhing, dying mass of human wretchedness, gathered in one vast, roofless charnel-house, with staring eye and hollow face turned heavenward; with skeleton hands outstretched, and parching lips framing an inarticulate prayer for mercy; while gaunt Famine, and Disease, and Death hover in phantom form above, and

mock their miseries; and over and around, the ghastly scene is filled with murky forms evoked by that baffled spirit that sought to found an empire upon the ruins of human Freedom.















JAN 4 - 1932

